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HENRY FOX FIRST LORD HOLLAND

A STUDY OF THE CAREER OF
AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY POLITICIAN

BY

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II

	PAGE
CHAPTER VII	
DESTROYER AND DEFENDER	5
CHAPTER VIII	
PROJECTOR OF MINISTRIES	72
CHAPTER IX	
IN THE BACKGROUND	146
CHAPTER X	
THE 'KING'S FRIEND'	216
CHAPTER XI	
THE POLITICIAN, AND THE MAN	291
APPENDICES	335
SPECIAL INDEX: HENRY FOX	387
GENERAL INDEX	391

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CHAPTER VII

DESTROYER AND DEFENDER

Fox might look back upon the late session of Parliament with much personal satisfaction. Every measure of the Administration had been passed, and the Prussian Treaty, the one really creditable output of the Cabinet's energies, had been accepted, despite the surly bickerings of his rival.¹ But the task had been a hard and thankless one. Nothing but his own untiring efforts had saved the Plate Bill from disaster, and the justice of the bitter gibes upon Minorca was almost too much even for Fox's power in argument. In his inmost heart he knew (and he voiced it in confidence to Doddington) that Minorca had been wantonly neglected, and the bitter intuition with which he realized his own position is well expressed in a letter to his friend, the Lord-Lieutenant : 'I wish Your Grace was here. I cannot freely explain my disagreeable circumstances. The rage of people, and of considerable people, for the loss of Minorca increases hourly. I have not more than my share of blame, which falls on the Duke of Newcastle in so violent

¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 4. It is hard to believe that anything but factiousness could have instigated Pitt's ridiculous criticisms of the treaty with Prussia.

a degree that, if he were not a very different make from what he has been represented, he could never be so cheerful as he is. But when the Parliament meets, the scene of action will be the House of Commons, and I being the only figure of a minister there, shall of course draw all the odium on me. When I have seen these two little great men again I will write to Your Grace.² In this letter we find the key to the whole situation. It was the coming session of Parliament on which the politician's mind was focussed.

Unquestionably one of the bitterest features of Fox's unpleasant position was the knowledge that Newcastle was neither satisfied with his handling of the Commons, nor grateful for his achievements in defence.³ He knew that his debating qualities during a ministerial crisis had been all that had gained him his high official position, and now he could readily see that when no sinister design was actually suspected, there was seldom a disposition to trust his activity or respect his understanding. The Ministers had called him 'to support a government from a share in which it was determined he should be excluded, and every part of which, where he had influence, it was a measure with Newcastle

² Fox to Devonshire, July 31, 1756: Torrens, *History of British Cabinets*, II. 299.

³ For example, writing in June, Newcastle asks, 'Is there or can there be any means found out of having more dependence upon Mr. Fox than we had the last session?'—Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 12, 1756: Add. MSS., 32865, f. 277.

to weaken' ;⁴ he was in fact to be taught the cut-and-dried lesson of subservience which Holderness and Robinson so fittingly exemplified. Possession of a high office of state necessitated his initiation into the mysteries of that inner circle which had formerly closed its doors, but once inside, he was little better than a captive. In meetings he 'was scarce suffered to give an opinion'; and if he did assert himself as in the instance of Minorca, and of his Gibraltar scheme, it was shown to be worse than if he had held his tongue. Yet his presence was required there, if for no other reason than to share the stigma of the Ministry's disasters. In fact 'these two little great men', Newcastle and Hardwicke, had been fixed in their determination to break the man whom necessity had forced upon them and who, for the sake of cabinet unanimity, must be a cipher. But when at last time, disaster and a politician's instinct pointed out that their efforts were no longer endurable, that little fortress, which had dominated the Government, was found so fragile that only consistent concord had kept it from falling, and the rebellion of one man could splinter it to atoms. Yet this resolute pair were successful in one point—they did 'break' the man they had enticed into their counsels. Fox might do his part in shattering the Administration; he might actually turn the Ministry out; but his own career would ever bear the mark of those fatal years in the council-chamber of the Newcastles.

⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 55.

In May, when anxiety for Minorca was casting its veil of gloom over the Foreign Office, the news came to Fox that his ablest supporter in the Commons was deserting him.⁵ On the 25th Chief Justice Ryder died, and for the vacant office no one could vie with Murray in seniority, legal fitness or services to the Administration. The Attorney-General was not an ambitious man, so far as power or influence was concerned, but he knew no peer in his profession, and he felt that the office was his right. In his petition for its conferment, he also made it a *sine qua non* that he should be raised to the dignity of a peerage.

Newcastle was distracted. ‘No man,’ he wrote the Attorney-General, ‘no ten men can fill your place.’⁶ As Walpole put it, ‘Murray was equally the buckler of Newcastle against his ally, Fox, and his antagonist, Pitt.’⁷ The former the Duke would not trust, and the frenzy which fear produced led

⁵ ‘Nor can all the allurements’, writes Fox, ‘and largest offers that were ever yet made to any man, bribe him from it. I shall miss him in the House of Commons, and indeed find an essential want of him. We were made for one another there.’—Fox to Williams, May 24, 1756: *Letters to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams*, Stowe MSS. (Brit. Mus.), 263.

⁶ Newcastle to Murray, May 30, 1756: Add. MSS., 32865, f. 143. Not content with painting in lurid colours their disastrous fortunes in the war and the Ministry’s danger in the Commons, Newcastle even tried to rouse Murray’s jealousy by alleging that Fox would not be sorry to have the Attorney-General leave the Commons. The letter presents an interesting example of Newcastle’s political dependence on his corps of supporters.

⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 64.

him to believe he would join forces with the latter. ‘What must then be the consequence?’ he continued, ‘a coalition between Fox and Pitt by sacrificing me. . . . It would be cruel of me to insist on your remaining in the House of Commons if you yourself don’t see the reason and force of it.’⁸

But pleadings, expostulations, threats of resignation, even assurances of certain disaster, were all lost upon the obdurate Attorney-General; and when the Duke thought to buy him from his purpose, and pensions and emoluments were offered, seemingly without end, the tired lawyer broke out with, ‘What have I done to be buried under such a load of resentment by a plundered country? Chief Justiceship or nothing.’⁹

Seeing at last that Murray was inflexible, the Duke persuaded Hardwicke to obtain the preferment for their friend; and the King reluctantly consented that a barony should be granted—although not till the opening of the next session.¹⁰ Meanwhile to Fox, who would now stand alone against the threats of orators and demagogues, the prospect loomed darker than ever. Cool, sound reasoning had won many a stubborn contest when a docile Parliament was eager to be convinced, but the genius of Pitt’s oratory when the

⁸ Newcastle to Murray, May 30, 1756. The fear of a coalition between Fox and Pitt was founded, as we have seen, on the former’s acceptance of Townshend’s Militia Bill.

⁹ Torrens, II. 324.

¹⁰ Newcastle to Murray, July 2, 1756: Add. MSS., 32866, f. 8.

nation was at fever-heat, was something Fox was exceedingly loth to face.

The First Lord had intermittent spasms of terror for his position, and, as usual, thought to involve all his colleagues in the snares his mind would conjure up. He knew from experience (he wrote to the Chancellor) that the Opposition would strike directly at him (Newcastle), and that he would be made answerable for other people's actions. In the first place, he didn't know that it was any one's fault ; he didn't remember that any one person proposed sending a ship to the Mediterranean sooner ;¹¹ but he did believe the facts were true as represented, namely : 'we had not vessels to send without exposing us at home.'

Such was the *résumé* of his fears and his excuses ; but later on he sounds the keynote of a future programme : 'I hope Your Lordship will talk seriously to My Lord Anson, to propose materials for defence, and also (which is still more of consequence) for the immediate trial and execution of Admiral Byng, if, as I think there can be no doubt, he deserves it. The sea officers should be learnt to talk in this manner, and not to think to fling blame upon civil ministers. Your Lordship knows the little share we have in military operations, or in the choice of military men, either at land or sea. And it would be very unjust for us to suffer, where we had scarce been consulted.' Some measures,

¹¹ It is quite possible that Fox had urged this but once, and had failed to make an impression.

concluded the anxious politician, must be pursued in the Mediterranean or elsewhere to ‘keep up people’s spirits and divert their resentment’.¹²

Thus was the unfortunate Admiral marked out for execution, and meanwhile the righteous indignation of the English people must be ‘diverted’.

Arrangements were made for a full meeting of the Cabinet on July 20, and the topic for discussion was the action to be taken as a result of the loss of Minorca.¹³ A minute of the conference is apparently not preserved, but there seems to have been no positive decision. Four days later, however, when Fox apprised his chief of a prize taken off Louisburg,¹⁴ the Duke replied in a letter that teemed with vigorous propositions—Corsica, America, anywhere, so long as an attempt was made, even if it should prove a failure; and no expense, he declared, should be spared. ‘Let me entreat you to think of some object,’ he begged his correspondent; ‘we had better fail in the attempt than attempt nothing.’¹⁵

Fox’s reply to this curious outburst of ardour seems to have been lost, or perhaps, remembering his Gibraltar scheme, he made no reply at all. But Hardwicke, whom politics could never completely dominate, counselled the First Lord wisely

¹² Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 19, 1756: Add. MSS. 32866, f. 210.

¹³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 19, 1756.

¹⁴ Fox to Newcastle, July 19, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 263.

¹⁵ Newcastle to Fox, July 24, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 265.

against attempting anything that might lead to failure—a result that might bring odium upon them ‘with redoubled force’.¹⁶ Meanwhile no time was lost in getting the good news from America published in the *Gazette*.¹⁷

One point which disturbed Fox, as has been intimated already, was the attitude of the King. Not only was it certain that the King had never recovered that esteem which he had once felt for Fox, but it was also most natural that His Majesty should recall with affection the man who had been supplanted for the other’s benefit.¹⁸ Such feelings might well have been much modified if the King had been properly handled, but that was precisely what the First Lord did not want.¹⁹ To foster suspicions, rather than allay them, was Newcastle’s present plan.²⁰

¹⁶ Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 24, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 278.

¹⁷ *London Gazette*, no. 9,528.

¹⁸ This is mentioned by Waldegrave as one of the causes of Fox’s disfavour in the Closet.—*Memoirs*, p. 81. The King enjoyed Robinson’s company for much the same reason as had induced him to cling so long to Granville. Both men spoke German fluently and had humoured his interest in German politics.

¹⁹ Even Murray advised Newcastle to cure these distempers in the Closet, ‘as (wrote the Attorney-General) we have too many ruptures on our hands already.’—Murray to Newcastle, May 24, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 104. But the value of the advice was unfortunately not appreciated.

²⁰ Waldegrave writes of his system of espionage and manipulation by virtue of which every word or act of Fox was put in an unfavourable light.—*Memoirs*, p. 81. The most notable

On the 4th of June, during the difficulties with Leicester House, the King asked Fox (whom he frequently consulted on the matter) what course he himself would take. ‘Whatever Your Majesty would have me,’ was the reply, and the King seemed so pleased that the Secretary ventured to demand a post in the Prince’s bedchamber for his nephew, Lord Digby. Newcastle assured His Majesty afterwards that he ‘always knew he would make that answer’. But whatever the force of this sneer, Fox plainly intended to extract the uttermost possible from these fleeting smiles of Royalty; and he was even successful in wheedling His Majesty into promising an earldom for Ilchester—a matter in which Newcastle was forced to acquiesce.²¹ Fox saw the King later—on the 12th—and took occasion to repeat his assurances of loyalty; and the two had a long conference, of which Newcastle did not learn the details. But the latter convinced himself that the King was far from satisfied with Fox in spite of the courtier’s arts, and believed that His Majesty feared possible

members of the Duke’s staff of informers were Stone, West and Holderness.

²¹ Some weeks previous Fox had felt that the coldness of the Closet was sufficient excuse for demanding a ‘public mark of favour’.—Fox to Williams, May 29, 1756: Stowe MSS. (Brit. Mus.), 263. It was to gain this object doubtless that he flattered the King in the audience of the 4th, and was apparently so far successful that he wrote to Newcastle on the 8th, requesting him to ‘prepare’ the King for signing the warrant.—Fox to Newcastle, June 8, 1756: Add. MSS., 32865, f. 231.

treachery in the present entanglements with Leicester House. The Duke also predicted significantly that Digby would *not* have his ambition gratified.²²

Some weeks later the King and his chief Minister had a long talk on the subject of Fox, and Newcastle poured out his tribulations concerning a recent quarrel over patronage. ‘Fox is black,’ declared the King, ‘I know him, though I don’t show it. I wish the Duke of Devonshire could be got from him.’²³ This, however, was more than Newcastle would venture to attempt.

But the King perhaps ‘showed it’ more than he realized, for George II was not naturally a good actor, and Fox was a very keen observer. At all events an episode occurred during the same month, which showed a large measure of courage on the part of the Secretary, and almost as little respect. It seems that on the 1st of July a meeting of the *Conciliabulum* which Murray also attended, voted instructions to Colonel Joseph Yorke (British Ambassador at The Hague) to the effect that Holland must execute her existing commercial treaty with England or else take steps to concert a new one.²⁴ The little republic, being anxious above all things to keep out of the impending war, had recently proclaimed its neutrality—an act largely due to

²² Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 12, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 277.

²³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 8, 1756 : Add. MSS., 35415, f. 213.

²⁴ Minute of meeting, July 1, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32997, f. 1.

resentment against England. Indeed the obstinate folly of the Newcastle Ministry was admirably exemplified by the step which it had taken of seizing Dutch vessels on the ground that they were engaged in carrying contraband of war ; and the ultimate result was Holland's adhesion to a maritime league avowedly directed against England.²⁵ Meanwhile, a few weeks after the meeting of the 1st, a peremptory message was sent to The Hague demanding that Holland declare war against France. Now the British Ambassador, acting upon the instance of the Princesse Gouvernante and others to whom he had shown the despatch, consented to delay its transmission in the hope of a change of feeling in the Estates. The action was prudent perhaps, and at all events not liable to censure while the diplomat's father was so potent a factor in the English Cabinet ; but Fox, whose martial disposition had instigated the measure in the hope that, if the Dutch refused, the commercial alliance might be dissolved,²⁶ was indignant at Yorke's assumption of discretionary power, and a warm altercation took place in the Closet on the 19th of July. The two secretaries vehemently disputed the point, and when the King sided with Holderness in defence of Yorke, Fox declined to with-

²⁵ A league of armed neutrality, consisting of Holland, Denmark and Sweden, was definitely constituted at Stockholm, July 12, 1756.—Waddington, *Louis XV et le Renversement des Alliances*, pp. 349–50.

²⁶ Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 18, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 206.

draw his contention. ‘It drew on,’ wrote the Senior Secretary, ‘a strong expression from the King.’²⁷

The relations of Fox with the King, as well as with his fellow Ministers, were considerably complicated by the differences with Leicester House during the summer. On the 4th of June the Prince of Wales attained his majority, and his grandfather eagerly embraced the opportunity to try to release the youth from the influence of his mother; he accordingly made known his intention not only of giving him an annual allowance of £40,000, but of finding apartments for his disposal at Kensington and St. James’s. The Prince—it is said by the artful advice of Legge—accepted the allowance with every expression of gratitude, but begged to be suffered to remain with his mother, thus giving His Majesty the unpleasant alternative of repealing the whole contents of the message (and thus, in effect, casting a reflection upon the Princess Dowager) or else of yielding a point upon which he had set his heart.

While this predicament was perplexing both Crown and Ministry, the Prince put forward a request that his mother’s favourite should be allowed the distinction of becoming Groom of the Stole to himself. The Earl of Bute was a Scotsman of noble birth and great fondness for culture and learning. His judgement is said to have

²⁷ Holderness to Newcastle, July 19, 1756: Add. MSS., 32866, f. 217.

generally swayed his intellectual inferiors; but to really able men he was more likely to appear shallow and superficial.²⁸ The fact that he was married and had several children did not prevent his ingratiating himself with his royal benefactress, and having a certain courtliness of manner he was able to attract a confidence that his abilities could scarcely have obtained. Perhaps the reason for Bute's remarkable career lay in the fact that he often veiled his ambition under a policy of trimming, and showed agility in employing opportunities without appearing to have made them. In the present instance the crisis in the Government had become sufficiently acute to make this opportunity for entering the arena most propitious, and the Dowager's infatuation was an all-sufficient medium for bringing this about.

The seemingly unimportant request—transmitted privately to the King and his Ministers—had all the unrevealed force of two determined characters behind it. In a letter to his friend Pitt, the Earl spoke of the ‘propriety, he had almost said necessity, of indulging His Royal Highness’.²⁹ The King, however, stood firm on both points at issue, particularly respecting Bute, whom, as Waldegrave rightly said, he suspected of alliance with Pitt.³⁰ The friction in the royal house had

²⁸ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 38.

²⁹ Bute to Pitt, July 15, 1756: *Chatham Corres.* I. 169.

³⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke June 12, 1756: Add. MSS.,

reached a stage so acute during the month of June that Waldegrave, whose favour at Leicester House, like that of Egmont and Lee, had suffered grievous encroachment from this newer counsellor, wrote to the First Lord on the 14th, begging permission to resign. The slavery he had undergone had been his duty, but he was not so callous that he could bear the circumstances of the past winter unmoved, and things had been said that never could be forgiven ; he hoped now that his retirement would heal the breach.³¹

Newcastle, upon whom the responsibility of peacemaking naturally fell, was unable to see how the Prince could be compelled to receive any nominee of his grandfather in his own household ; and he hoped that the King might be persuaded to countenance Bute, although admitting that such a result would not be easy of attainment.³² The Duke had been personally solicited by messages from Leicester House, but replied only by professions of respect, and seemed to shrink from hazarding an interview.³³

The *Conciliabulum*, with Waldegrave present, met on the 7th of July to discuss the vexatious question. The Chancellor expressed his disbelief in the ‘very extraordinary reports’ concerning

32865, f. 277. Doubtless the King felt also that Leicester House was endeavouring to push him as far as it was able.

³¹ Waldegrave to Newcastle, June 14, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 302.

³² Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 29, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 463.

³³ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 65–6.

Lord Bute,³⁴ but he would not advise the King to give way. Granville spoke next and treated the whole matter as a joke, declaring that there had been, and always would be a row in the Royal Family ; but said in conclusion that he thought the King was the best judge of his own affairs. Fox then observed that, as it would fall to his province to defend His Majesty's refusal in the Commons, he wished clearly to understand the grounds thereof, in order to prepare himself for the Opposition. The Prince's governor was finally allowed to speak and gave the sensible opinion that ' Leicester House would never be contented unless the request was granted in its fullest extent '. Decision was then postponed at Newcastle's instance, although Fox, whose temper hated delays, wrung his consent to another conference. After the meeting Newcastle, according to Walpole's account, persuaded the King that Fox was paying court to the Princess.³⁵

It appeared quite evident that the Leader of the Commons in no way relished the task ahead of him in the coming session, and, believing that there was already embarrassment enough without an added

³⁴ Probably an allusion to the scandals attached to his name in connexion with the Princess. Waldegrave—with commendable loyalty—never discusses the question in his memoirs. Probably he cherished suspicions while lacking the evidence for denial.

³⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 64. Authorities for the details of the meeting : *ibid.* II. 63–4 ; Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 67–8.

burden, he made himself known, through a channel that would reach Newcastle, his confirmed belief that either Bute or Pitt was indispensable to the Administration. Apparently the consequences of 'Minorca' were his chief anxiety.³⁶

Newcastle certainly shared his colleague's desire for a successful Parliament, although the capability of his Leader in the Lower House (despite his own statements) had led him unconsciously to minimize the question. Stone had told the First Lord that Fox's difficulty was undoubtedly his coming duties, and Lady Yarmouth repeated the opinion—which she had given more than once before—that Pitt should be secured. This set the Duke thinking, and he wondered if the King was in accord. Fox, in the opinion of the Countess, was (to quote her French) a '*mauvais choix*'.

Another matter which puzzled the First Lord was Fox's request for an interview some time in the near future. Stone emphatically believed—although he did not say why—that its motive was an intended suggestion that Pitt should be given the Seals and some lucrative employment be found for the outgoing Secretary³⁷ (a noteworthy remark in view of Fox's later career). On the basis of these rumours and opinions the Duke and his confidential adviser met together on the evening of July 22 and considered the matter at length.

³⁶ West to Newcastle, July 24, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 268.

³⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 26, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 275.

Pitt, from the latter's connexions as well as the King's dislike, was quickly dismissed from the question, but it was thought advisable to find out clearly what Fox's position was, and offer him, if possible, such secondary help as that of Sackville, Conway and others.³⁸ If His Majesty should approve of this method, they would then 'enter into all proper confidence with Mr. Fox'.

Thus one may readily perceive the lack of co-operation between the ruling spirits of the Cabinet and their defender in the House of Commons. Stone, being sent to question the latter, reported that Fox had declared that Bute must be given his wish, if it could possibly be managed ; if not, Pitt's succession to the Seals might do, although he doubted if the latter would accept them.³⁹ It was probably soon afterwards that Fox received his desired interview, and proposed in plain terms what Stone had first hinted. But we have no details of such a meeting, and it is possible that none took place.

No doubt Fox appreciated the unlikelihood of a proper understanding with himself, and was hoping that his colleagues would employ the chance which he gave them of peacefully allowing him to retire ; to remain in his position, with Leicester House in anger, was more than he would endure, and these promises of confidence in him, which

³⁸ Minute, Powis House, July 22, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32997, f. 11.

³⁹ Minute, Newcastle House, August 3, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 16.

the Newcastles found so easy to express, were altogether too shallow to afford him any satisfaction. Devonshire agreed with Cumberland that he should accept them, but His Royal Highness added, '*and not depend on them.*' On the 4th of August Fox enjoyed a meeting with the Chancellor, which he described as a 'most courteous and barren conversation'; and a letter which he wrote to Devonshire the same day showed no little discouragement with the situation. The Secretary 'vowed to God' that he knew not why the King was so prejudiced against him. 'I am abused,' he wrote, 'and prints made of me, and I am to be hanged with the Duke of Newcastle; I fancy His Majesty has heard this, and likes me the better for being hated by his subjects.' He went on to say that he expected to see Stone again on the following day; that Stone talked very freely, assured him that the Duke was sincere, and even admitted that the latter would do well to resign from his 'dangerous and unmanageable post'.⁴⁰ The letter shows, as his later life even more clearly proves, that deep-seated contempt which Fox felt for public opinion. He had no love for defending ministerial blunders in the House of Commons, but he cared little for the storms that raged outside.

On the 19th of August the *Public Advertiser* printed a letter by some unknown gentleman, which, after condemning the 'phlegmatic indolence' of Anson, and declaring the spirit of the

⁴⁰ Fox to Devonshire, August 4, 1756: Torrens, II. 299.

nation still unbroken by the recent disaster, proposed a coalition of Fox and Pitt as the remedy for a suffering country ; ‘two gentlemen,’ it called them, ‘of apparent superiority to all others in either party.’⁴¹ No names were mentioned, and there was indeed no need to indicate the persons meant. Next day the wary Chancellor broke the news to the King and sounded him with respect to the sentiments expressed. His Majesty, according to Hardwicke, showed unqualified disapproval of the idea, but the Chancellor believed some initiative should be taken with Pitt or he would in very truth unite with the Junior Secretary ; furthermore, if it was true that Fox was declaring that the Government should have sent earlier and stronger support to the Mediterranean, he must be made to say explicitly what part he should take in the Commons.⁴²

Meanwhile the question of Bute’s elevation was yet unsettled. Fox was still impatient to have the quarrel terminated, and he gave unqualified support to the intention of enlisting Argyll to influence Bute.⁴³ Murray, as being another Scotsman, had been commissioned to engage the Duke’s services,⁴⁴ and Fox tried to hasten the decision by declaring that if Bute were not prepared to come into the

⁴¹ *Public Advertiser*, August 19, 1756.

⁴² Hardwicke to Newcastle, August 20, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 492.

⁴³ Fox to Devonshire, August 4, 1756.

⁴⁴ Newcastle to Murray, July 9, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 103.

terms offered, the Ministry should submit to him.⁴⁵ He had severely criticized at least one message to Leicester House,⁴⁶ and evidently considered that his colleagues had bungled ever since. During the first week in August he had made a strong representation to Newcastle that the Prince should be conciliated, and repeated it so emphatically to the Duke's private secretary that the latter believed that Fox would resign if the King did not yield ; indeed it was common talk in the City that he had already tendered his resignation.⁴⁷

Argyll had little hope of succeeding in his mission,⁴⁸ and did scarcely more than broach the subject to the prospective Groom of the Stole. Bute appeared extremely mortified by the refusal, and Argyll agreed with him in condemning the notoriety which the affair had produced, especially the insertion of his name in a public message in reply to a private request.⁴⁹ Fox was at this time confined to his bed with a severe sore throat and high fever ;⁵⁰ and the papers reported him

⁴⁵ Fox to Devonshire, August 4, 1756.

⁴⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 16, 1756 : Add. MSS., 35415, f. 225.

⁴⁷ Jones to Hardwicke, August 6, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 243.

⁴⁸ Murray to Newcastle, July 10, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 11.

⁴⁹ Murray to Newcastle, August 25, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 46.

⁵⁰ Holderness to Newcastle, August 24, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 28 ; Hardwicke to Newcastle, August 29, 1756 : *ibid.* f. 43. Walpole wrote in a letter to Conway that Fox was never in any danger.—*Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 452.

to be very ill ; but he was back at his duties before a fortnight had elapsed.

The King, for his part, had never softened more than to consent to a pension for Bute, if the Earl would renounce Pitt and the Opposition ; ‘Fox,’ he added grimly, ‘shall have nothing to do with it.’⁵¹ But George II should have known better than to compose an ultimatum, whether mentally, verbally or on paper ; and it was the stubborn determination of his Junior Secretary that forced His Majesty to surrender. On September 7 Fox wrote to Devonshire that there was to be a meeting two days later, in which he supposed he would be the only one for advising concession to Bute ; but that, and that alone was his advice. ‘I will give it,’ he declared, ‘and insist on the King knowing I give it. I suspect His Majesty has been told that I have been making court there, which is very false.⁵² He shall know my opinion and the honest reasons for it.’⁵³ Unfortunately Fox’s influence in the Closet (if indeed he possessed any at all) was purely secondary, and the First Lord took care that his colleague was misrepresented.⁵⁴

The truth was, Newcastle at last saw that action of some sort had become imperative, and, as usual, he wanted the credit of it. But old as he was at intrigue, he had in that art one superior ; and Fox,

⁵¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 8, 1756 : Add. MSS., 35415, f. 213. ⁵² Page 19.

⁵³ Fox to Devonshire, September 7, 1756 : Torrens, II. 306.

⁵⁴ Fox to Devonshire, September 10, 1756 : *ibid.* II. 307.

who was not to be muzzled or intimidated by a stroke of jealousy on the part of his colleague, lost no time in outbidding him and justifying himself. On the 11th the King told Waldegrave that Fox (he mentioned Barrington also) had convinced him of the necessity of yielding for the sake of stability in the House of Commons.⁵⁵ Hardwicke remarked that this was 'extraordinary', and as usual suspected an ulterior motive;⁵⁶ but the Secretary's insistence had done its work, and though it seems odd for the friend of Cumberland to be winning a victory for Leicester House, the affair was in reality a struggle to satisfy his own peace of mind. After some preliminary negotiations through Granville the King signed his capitulation on the 4th of October, and all the demands of the little court were granted.⁵⁷ Not many weeks later Lord Waldegrave resigned his uncomfortable post,⁵⁸ and Egmont was not long in following him.⁵⁹ A new epoch had begun for Leicester House and the young Prince.

The vigorous politics of the man whom he would have made a tool gave the First Lord the gravest anxiety. Chesterfield, waxing prophetic, added terror by foreseeing a Fox-Cumberland Adminis-

⁵⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 18, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 325.

⁵⁶ Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 19, 1756 : ibid., f. 339.

⁵⁷ The King to the Prince, October 4, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 86.

⁵⁸ Waldegrave, p. 70.

⁵⁹ *Memoirs of a Celebrated Character*, p. 98.

tration,⁶⁰ and the Chancellor persuaded Newcastle to call upon their old colleague and get to the heart of the danger.⁶¹ The Earl, more than delighted with his successful manœuvring—for no one hated more the thought of insignificance—said nothing of his recent prediction, but told the First Lord that it was plain that Fox's name was left out of the newspaper attacks ; one article, he said, had declared that timidity was no part of Fox's character, and that hence it was deducible that the latter had no share in 'the timid expedient by which Minorca was lost'. The Earl further added—and his logic was undeniable—that Fox had so often declared that they might have sent earlier and stronger detachments to the Mediterranean 'that it would be almost impossible for him to maintain the contrary in the House of Commons'.⁶²

Probably no one realized this more than Fox. The pacification of Leicester House was something,

⁶⁰ Chesterfield suggested that Cumberland could propose Fox for the Treasury as being popular with the army and navy, intimate with the Speaker, and in command of an increasing number of followers in the Commons : that, in short, he would be sure of a majority in the House.—Minute of Dr. Squire's account to Newcastle, endorsed August 26, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 78. (The date attributed to this document is probably a mistake, as Hardwicke distinctly refers to Dr. Squire's story in his letter to Newcastle on the 20th).

⁶¹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, August 20, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 492.

⁶² Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 28, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 111.

but it was not everything to be desired ; and whereas he knew that he had the hardest task of any of the Ministers, he was also probably aware that his colleagues supposed it to their interest to undermine him. Even Granville—his only friend in the inner Cabinet—was disposed to misjudge him ;⁶³ and his old associates were too thoroughly in accord with his own convictions to relieve his mind on the subject of Minorca. Thus he was forced to tell Newcastle that both Sackville and Bedford felt that reinforcements could have been sent sooner, and would not easily be disabused of their opinions.⁶⁴

And yet, in spite of all, Fox clung to office. Was he afraid that his record would never enable him to return if once he should retire, or did he feel that, despite the Ministers' distrust, the game was worth the price ? We know from his hint of compensation that he considered the future uncertain ; yet not (as we shall see) until his prerogative of managing the Commons was violated would he feel that his position was wholly without resource. And so—in a situation that was well nigh unbearable—Fox clung to the dregs of power. But it was only a question of months or weeks when his rival should have his turn. That year of disaster

⁶³ Disgusted with the endless friction in politics, Granville flared out at both Newcastle and Fox, declaring them to be ‘ cowards ’. Fox repelled the charge with warmth to Newcastle, and pleaded the political necessity of conciliating Bute.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 2, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 175.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

which was ruining Fox was all that was needed to constitute Pitt, the ally of Leicester House, an invincible candidate for political power. It was inevitable that before long the pendulum must swing back.

But Fox was not the only one whose position was precarious ; for Newcastle was more than ever a prey to his forebodings, and he heaped question upon question for his poor ‘oracle’ to answer. Riots in different parts of the country⁶⁵ showed the state of feeling which existed, and caricatures and handbills graphically portrayed the Ministry’s incompetence. One of the boldest of these, distinctly aiming its shafts at ‘Newcastle & Co.’, was found one morning placarded on the door of the Royal Exchange.⁶⁶ Yet hardly less disquieting was the rumour that a formidable opposition was being organized by Townshend for the coming session of Parliament ;⁶⁷ and the Ministry’s apprehensions were more than justified by their failure to concert a ‘system’. Sackville, Oswald and Egmont had all alike been courted, and all declined to lend a hand in aiding a tottering ministry.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Holderness to Newcastle, August 26, 1756.

⁶⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 26, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 278. Since Newcastle, as usual, took it all to himself, Hardwicke endeavoured to assure him that he himself, Fox and Anson were included in the ‘honours’ (as he expressed it).

⁶⁷ Hardwicke to Newcastle, August 26, 1756.

⁶⁸ Nugent to Newcastle, August 24, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 30 ; Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 10, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 163.

More and more it forced itself upon the Duke's unwilling mind that Pitt, his bitterest enemy, must sooner or later be sought ; yet his feelings on the subject can best be read in his lament, ‘ What a figure shall we make with Mr. Pitt coming in conquest over us ! ’⁶⁹ So acute was the First Lord’s distress that he even brought himself to confer with the man he had grown to distrust and dislike. But even this move was in vain ; for Fox refused to open his mind, and the conference only resulted in a quarrel over patronage.⁷⁰

So September gave way to October, and there was still no ‘ system ’ for Parliament, and still no agreement with the Leader of the Commons. Now, as though the present distress were not enough to bear, the Duke was made to shiver at an apparition of the past. Advices were sent to the Ministry that writers on the Continent were fiercely condemning a nation that deliberately attacked another without a declaration of war ; and the Duke was forced to bestir himself to get the charge refuted.⁷¹ Finally the tidings reached England that Fort Oswego had fallen. It would seem as though Frederick of Prussia were the country’s only prop. ‘ Tell His Grace,’ wrote Fox to Digby,

⁶⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 28, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 101.

⁷⁰ Newcastle to Murray, September 26, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 439.

⁷¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 10, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 163.

'that neither disgrace nor common danger makes the Duke of Newcastle more practicable.'⁷² He might have substituted 'practical'. When every circumstance should have told him that his interest, nay, his very political salvation depended upon Henry Fox, the First Lord only drove his colleague further into discontent.

The rift in the Ministry was certainly gaping wider. The opening weeks of October were ominously eventful; for signs of approaching dissolution were manifest, followed by what might be termed an 'explosion'. The Duke of Newcastle, probably in one of his momentary spasms of violence, remarked to Barrington that if he were not afraid of offending Fox, he would offer the Seals to Pitt the very next day. The Secretary-at-War, being one of the faithful following, immediately took his cue, and proceeded to consult the man in question. He had remembered, it seems, that some months previously Fox had offered to relinquish the Seals to Pitt and accept an office of lower rank;⁷³ he now reminded him of his former promise, and then repeated the Duke's bold assertion. Fox, who might have wondered at Newcastle's forgetfulness, needed little talent to perceive that the First Lord was only pondering possibilities; but he consented at Barrington's request to repeat his assurances to the First Lord,

⁷² Fox to Digby, October 11, 1756: MSS. of G. W. Digby, Esq., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII, app., part 1, p. 220.

⁷³ See page 21.

and according to his own account he kept his word.⁷⁴

The same day that Barrington tried his skill in diplomacy, Newcastle wrote to Fox that Leicester House was pleased with the King's message, but he was disappointed to learn that the Marquis of Rockingham would probably accept the offer (recently tendered as a compliment) of the employment which Digby desired.⁷⁵ Fox's reply showed astonishment and indignation. He had long ago solicited this honour for his nephew,⁷⁶ and, since Newcastle had obtained one royal promise, there is no doubt but that, if Fox had possessed an ounce of influence in the Ministry, this particular favour or its equivalent would have been granted at any cost. The Secretary had done well to secure an earldom for his brother, but that was before his influence was quite extinct. He now reminded the Duke that both he and the King had pledged their word upon it, and since he had told Digby of his good fortune, this turn would put himself in a most disagreeable and unmerited light.⁷⁷ Newcastle's answer the next day showed much concern and wounded innocence; His Majesty and he had assumed that Rockingham would not quit the royal

⁷⁴ Fox to the King, October 15, 1756: Add. MSS., 32868, f. 303; Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756: Stone MSS. (Brit. Mus.), 263.

⁷⁵ Newcastle to Fox, October 5, 1756: Add. MSS., 32868, f. 84.

⁷⁶ See page 13.

⁷⁷ Fox to Newcastle, October 6, 1756: Add. MSS., 32868, f. 102.

household when the King had pressed him to remain. The Duke called it an 'unforeseen accident', and hoped that Fox would see it in the right light and 'reconsider the affair'.⁷⁸

But 'reconsideration' was improbable, and the First Lord wrote to his chief adviser a few days later that he believed Fox would not be satisfied with anything.⁷⁹ Fear, however, at last gained the mastery, although the Duke yielded the point with very bad grace, assuring Fox that he ought to be infinitely obliged to him, as the King was much averse to granting the favour. He used, in fact, such strong expressions that Fox could readily divine that he had been misrepresented to the King.⁸⁰ It was during this quarrel that Newcastle ventured to fill some vacant employments—some of them with members of the House of Commons—without in any degree consulting the acknowledged leader of the Lower House.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Newcastle to Fox, October 7, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 126.

⁷⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 10, 1756 : ibid., f. 163.

⁸⁰ The circumstances of Newcastle's final consent—which were nothing less than an affront—are told by Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 87. 'In the meantime,' wrote Fox to Digby, 'You are Lord of the Bedchamber to the Prince, unless my behaviour alters it again. But though there should be anger enough to wish it changed, there is fear enough to keep that as it is, I think.'—Fox to Digby (undated), *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII, app., part 1, p. 220.

⁸¹ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756 : Stowe MSS. (Brit. Mus.), 263. The account is confirmed by Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 87. Newcastle wrote to Hardwicke

Obviously matters were hastening to a crisis. On the 11th, to quote Newcastle's description, 'Stone had . . . a long conversation with Mr. Fox, and it is the worst that I have heard of since he was Secretary of State.' It was, in truth, a long *r  sum * of the injured minister's grievances. He was hated by the King, he declared, partly because of the jealousy inspired by a correspondence which he had had with Bute ; Leicester House detested him as usual for his attachment to the Duke of Cumberland ; and he was, more than all others, exposed to the resentment of the nation. As leader of the Commons, he had to bear all the responsibility without any credit to support it ; and it was well known how he stood in the Cabinet. 'Thank God,' he concluded, 'I have the wherewithal to live without either court or employment.' Such was Fox's statement of his own case, and Newcastle could now be prepared for the inevitable.

The effect upon the First Lord was simply to increase the distraction of a man who had aimed at sole direction, only to find that one who was essential to his success in one particular was unwilling to support him any longer. When the Duke sought comfort from Lady Yarmouth, usually a faithful ally, he was told that 'he must do the best he can with Mr. Fox', which showed that Pitt had never been seriously considered by the Crown. More than anything else, the Duke of matters which he submitted to Fox and recommendations which he supported, but does not clear himself of the charge.

thought of the approaching session, with Fox in no humour to concert a 'system', and no one practicable to take his place. 'For God's sake, my dear Lord,' he begged his mentor, 'tell me what to do ; and I will follow it.'⁸²

But it was not yet Newcastle's turn to act. On the same day that Hardwicke had replied to his friend with fruitless advice, and, after racking his brains, had suggested bidding for Legge, Secretary Fox wrote to the First Lord what practically amounted to an announcement of his intended resignation.⁸³ It was a courteous note—perhaps more courteous than quite sincere—but the time of complaining was as surely over as that of compromise ; and when the Duke had read it, he could find no other words to say than 'What shall I do ?'⁸⁴ The Lords of the Treasury, who were present, must have been keenly interested.

Fox was very evidently taking the Duke at his word. He had long meditated retiring from an unbearable position, and had vainly offered his chief an opportunity to supplant him, but now that he must act upon his own responsibility, if he were to act at all, he lost no time in executing his determination. Having first acquainted Gran-

⁸² Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 223.

⁸³ Fox to Newcastle, October 13, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 247. Fox had met Doddington the day before and told his friend that 'things went ill', but apparently gave him no details.—Doddington, *Diary*, October 12, 1756.

⁸⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 88.

ville with his intention and his reasons, he called on Lady Yarmouth to induce her to present to the King a paper which he had drawn up, containing a concise statement of his case ; but the Countess being unfortunately not at home,⁸⁵ he returned apparently to Granville. The Lord President, having never understood politics and having likewise a nature that was habitually callous, saw only the voluntary abandonment of a high position in foreign affairs, and reproached his friend for wishing to relinquish a great opportunity.⁸⁶ Yet knowing Newcastle, Granville soon came to the conclusion that Fox was acting wisely.

All these movements came somehow to Newcastle's ears, since his machinery for gleaning information was no small factor in his long-continued primacy ; and he hurried to Granville to learn fuller intelligence. When he found his worst fears confirmed, he suddenly offered to relinquish his place to the old statesman ; while Fox himself should become Chancellor of the Exchequer.⁸⁷ But if the Lord President had served the

⁸⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 13, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 251.

⁸⁶ 'Fox', declared his friend (as Walpole gives it), 'I don't love to have you say things that will not be believed. If you was of my age, very well . . . but you should be ambitious. I want to instil a nobler ambition into you ; to make you knock the heads of the kings of Europe together, and jumble something out of it that may be of service to this country.'—*Memoirs of George II*, II. 88. Such had been the passion which Granville himself had had so short a time to enjoy.

⁸⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 13, 1755.

Duke of Newcastle it was not because he admired him or was blind to his lack of capacity, and it was characteristic of the man that he had shown the Duke on more than one occasion how thoroughly he despised him. ‘I thought,’ he now replied, ‘I had cured you of such offers last year.⁸⁸ I will be hanged a little before I take your place rather than a little after.’⁸⁹

But Granville was in no sense a reticent man, and Newcastle left him with a clearer account of Fox’s programme, however little it inclined him to be sanguine.⁹⁰ His first act was then to warn the Countess that Fox intended to call again the following morning—a plausible excuse for fore-stalling the Secretary with the ‘Newcastle side of the story’.⁹¹

It would be tiresome to recapitulate all the deductions, excuses, and protestations which occurred to the First Lord and the Chancellor in discussing the affair. Suffice it to say that the Duke tried to persuade himself that Fox was taking advantage of a national crisis to force his terms upon the King, and that nothing short of the Treasury would satisfy him; as for the matter of Barrington’s message, the Secretary was

⁸⁸ See vol. I, p. 336.

⁸⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 88. The use of the word ‘hanged’ was a clever allusion to the virulent hand-bills from which Newcastle had suffered.

⁹⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 13, 1756.

⁹¹ Newcastle to Yarmouth, October 13, 1756: Add. MSS. 2868, f. 254.

evidently striving to convince the King that he (Newcastle) was negotiating a treaty with Pitt.⁹² The Chancellor believed—or wrote that he did—that Fox had no real wish to quit, and that, if the King would take him at his word and resort to Pitt, the Junior Secretary would speedily repent his haste. He did not think, as the Duke did, that Cumberland had a hand in the affair; but both agreed that ‘support in the Commons’ meant the old ‘hankering’ after greater manipulation of the spoils.⁹³

The suggestion that Fox was fighting for a higher seat makes Rigby’s comments prophetic, in his letter to Bedford the day after the convulsion took place. ‘I shall leave all reflection,’ he wrote, ‘till I am further informed; but I cannot help fearing for my friend, that mankind will attribute to his ambition what really proceeds from ill-usage, and falsely lay to his charge any consequences that may happen to the King’s affairs or the public.’⁹⁴ If desire for wealth is a type of ambition, ‘mankind,’ judging from results, was partly right, but nothing but persistent ill-usage had driven Fox to close his career in high ministerial office. The broader aspects or phases of his ambition—if indeed they had existed since March, 1754—had been ruthlessly trampled to death since.

⁹² Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 13, 1756.

⁹³ Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 14, 1756: Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, III. 70.

⁹⁴ Rigby to Bedford, October 14, 1756: *Bedford Corres.* II. 199.

Fox disappointed expectation by visiting Lady Yarmouth again on the 13th, but in the meantime Newcastle's letter had probably been received, and she declined to receive the paper. Undaunted, Fox sent it to her in the evening and received it back the following noon.⁹⁵ At a renewed conference on that day (the 14th) the Countess attempted earnestly to dissuade him from his intention ; 'Monsieur Fox,' she began, '*vous êtes trop honnête homme pour quitter à présent.*'⁹⁶ But all the lady's efforts were foredoomed to failure. When later in the conversation Fox appealed to her whether he had not formerly told her that if, on the death of Pelham, the Duke would treat him sincerely, he would in that case be as loyal to him as he had been to Walpole, the Countess replied, 'Ah, Monsieur Fox, *il y avoit bien de la différence entre ces deux hommes-la.*'⁹⁷ The difference was only too marked. Sir Robert Walpole was a benevolent despot ; the Duke of Newcastle aspired to be one, but his benevolence was a slave to his tortuous, futile struggle to sustain his despotism.

Granville, who saw Fox again on the 14th, was aware that he was inflexible when his mind was made up, and wrote in words to that effect to Stone,⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 14, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 281.

⁹⁶ Fox to Digby, October 14, 1756 (though bearing no date) : *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII, app., part 1, p. 220.

⁹⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 88.

⁹⁸ Granville to Stone, October 14, 1756 : Add. MSS., 5416, f. 114.

who in turn reported it to Newcastle. Fox had told the Lord President that he knew Pitt would never consent to come in, and the Earl, having requested an interview with Newcastle, not only reported Fox's latest discourse, but showed him the latter's 'paper', which he was to deliver to the King the next day; and the First Lord promptly epitomized it to the Chancellor as well as he could remember it.⁹⁹

No one rested less than Newcastle during these eventful days, and, after leaving the Lord President, he sought an audience with the King, which seemed at first promising, His Majesty dwelling much upon his long distrust of the Junior Secretary. The Duke then ventured to mention Granville's suggested alternatives—to give Fox more power, or to substitute Pitt.

'But I don't like Pitt,' the King objected querulously; 'he won't do my business.' The Duke, then becoming suddenly bold, declared that Pitt must be told he would have to. Yet the King was not convinced—more than that he considered Fox the lesser of the two evils and looked upon him as a refuge from the man he detested; 'I will talk to Fox,' he said, 'and see what I can do.' This was exactly what the First Lord wished to avoid, and he laboured hard to prevail upon the King to forgo his intention;

⁹⁹ A synopsis of Fox's paper (made by Lord Temple) may be found in *Grenville Papers*, I. 174–5. The original paper is in the Newcastle collection: Add. MSS., 32868, f. 303.

but the Sovereign was obdurate, and insisted that he would induce Fox to remain for the coming session at least. Meanwhile the latter had a firm footing with the fickle Countess, who was now, the Duke said, ‘heart and soul for him.’¹⁰⁰

On the following day Newcastle saw the King again, and, determined once more to strike a blow in advance of his opponent, he imposed upon the royal good humour by impugning the contents of Fox’s letter. However much His Majesty may have reserved his partiality, the Duke was so far successful in his tactics that he actually ended in obtaining the royal permission to sound Pitt, upon whom the King, if necessary, would confer the seals of Secretary of State, which Fox would relinquish. This was success indeed !

Granville was the next to enter the Closet, and presented Fox’s paper. In it the Secretary had told of his proposal to Newcastle, of the affair with Barrington, and of his unwillingness to continue in office without credit in the House of Commons. The King, already pledged to Pitt, was now furious at his rival, and underlined the passages in the paper which gave him the most offence ; he then condemned Fox for his ingratitude, said he would prefer any one else for the position, yet (with curious inconsistency) bade Granville appeal to his friend’s ‘conscience’ not to ‘desert his

¹⁰⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 14, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 281.

service at this critical time'.¹⁰¹ Holderness went into the Closet last and was given the paper to deliver to the First Lord.

Fox could easily see that his enemies were not inclined to give him the satisfaction of being urged to stay ; and indeed they knew too well that such a turn would mean more concession than they were willing to grant. 'I had promised,' he wrote to a friend, some weeks later, 'to go on one session more with the Duke of Newcastle, but it was not thought worth while to ask me, nor was I ever asked.'¹⁰² But at least the Secretary was saved from an unpleasant dilemma, since to continue as Leader of the House for even one session was exactly what he most wished to avoid ; and his promise to do so had probably been extracted by the King without the knowledge or sanction of the other ministers. It seems that Fox—out of deference to Lady Yarmouth's appeals—had consented at least to receive an audience in the Closet ; and the interview was held on the 18th. At first he encountered nothing but reproaches. The Sovereign knew that Fox had

¹⁰¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 15, 1756 : Harris, III. 73 ; Rigby to Bedford, October 18, 1756 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 200. Judging from Rigby's account (*ibid.*) Fox was much displeased with Granville's handling of his case ; and certainly the Lord President was by nature unfitted for the tortuous methods of 'practical politics'. One of Granville's *faux pas* (which roused Fox's indignation) is given by Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 89.

¹⁰² Fox to Collinson, November 24, 1756 : Liechtenstein, *Holland House*, I. 49.

been the most instrumental in the appointment of Bute, and he was apparently vindictive or ungracious enough to charge him with interest at Leicester House. ‘Sir,’ was the other’s gentle reproach, ‘what I am so happy in—my attachment to your son—might have assured you against that.’ The King, on his side, disavowed having made any overtures to Pitt; and concluded by ‘appealing to Fox’s honour’ not to leave him in the midst of a crisis. ‘He was calm,’ wrote Fox (in commenting on the interview), ‘serious, full of anger, but determined not to show it.’¹⁰³

Meanwhile Newcastle had lost no time in availing himself of the King’s unwonted charity, and laid upon Hardwicke the uncomfortable task of besieging the ex-Paymaster. ‘The business is now done,’ he declared, ‘but we must strike while the iron is hot;’ and at present the fear haunted him that Fox might capture the King’s confidence, since Granville was expected to return to court on the morrow, and Cumberland himself was to see the King on the day after. The Duke’s intended counter-move was that Hardwicke should write immediately and get an appointment with Pitt for the 19th; and meanwhile he himself and the Chancellor should talk the matter over the night before.¹⁰⁴ All this betokened a haste that circumstances were to prove unnecessary. ‘My place,’

¹⁰³ Fox to Bedford, October 19, 1756: *Bedford Corres.* II. 202; Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.* II. 92.

¹⁰⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 15, 1756.

wrote Fox to Bedford, ‘will, I doubt not, on any terms be offered him,’¹⁰⁵ but despite his grounds for resentment he heartily wished that Pitt ‘might come’.¹⁰⁶ He had a certain interest—revealed in course of time—in wanting the Administration to recover its stability.

The Chancellor had no relish for the struggle before him, but Newcastle had impressed it upon him that Granville might induce Fox to submit to the King,¹⁰⁷ and Holderness wrote in haste that the astute Lord President—if he could be judged by hints that he threw out—was determined to enforce Fox’s terms in the Closet.¹⁰⁸ The Chancellor was also vexed by the thought that Fox would claim the merit of naming Pitt and then yielding up his place to him, and readily agreed with Newcastle that they were probably in alliance.¹⁰⁹

Pitt came to Lord Royston’s¹¹⁰ apartments on the night of Tuesday the 19th, and ‘we fought,’ wrote Hardwicke, ‘all the weapons through.’¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Fox to Bedford, October 19, 1756.

¹⁰⁶ Fox to Digby (letter undated but probably written October 16), *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII (MSS. of G. W. Digby, Esq.).

¹⁰⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 15, 1756.

¹⁰⁸ Holderness to Newcastle, October 16, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 340.

¹⁰⁹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 16, 1756. The Chancellor made much of the fact that Pitt’s country-place was near that of Calcraft, a cousin and private secretary of Fox, where the latter might usually be found on Saturdays.

¹¹⁰ Eldest son of the Chancellor.

¹¹¹ Hardwicke to Royston, October 21, 1756 : Harris, III. 77.

The much-dreaded orator found that professions of regard to the King came as easily as usual to an unsqueamish tongue, but that he should assist the Duke of Newcastle, especially after the latter's conduct of the war, was a proposition that he would not swallow. Pitt asserted drily and candidly that the First Lord had so engrossed the King's confidence that he himself could not expect any share in it;¹¹² and no amount of strategy or legal reasoning could shake him in this conviction. After hearing Pitt's terms—which were obviously unacceptable—the Chancellor immediately sent word to his anxious friend that the answer was an ‘absolute, *final* negative, without any reserve for further deliberation.’¹¹³ The same day Fox penned a letter to Bedford, in which he said that, if Pitt refused, the reign of Newcastle was over.¹¹⁴

But Pitt had no sooner delivered his ultimatum than he seemed to have regretted its tone. Two days later his haughty exclusiveness was so far weakened that he asked and received an audience of Lady Yarmouth.¹¹⁵ Pitt's object was un-

¹¹² Fox to Digby, October 20, 1756: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

¹¹³ ‘In short,’ he concluded, ‘there never was a more unsuccessful negotiator.’—Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 19, 1756: Add. MSS., 32868, f. 360.

¹¹⁴ Fox to Bedford, October 19, 1756.

¹¹⁵ As Pitt had never before paid court to the King's mistress, as so many applicants for office were wont to do, his present visit to Lady Yarmouth naturally gave rise to considerable

doubtedly to make it known to the King that no mistake would be made in raising him to power ;¹¹⁶ in fact ambition had been so long tantalized and genius so consistently ignored, that nothing less than an heroic effort seemed likely to produce relief. Now, although the exclusion of Newcastle was still a *sine qua non*, he took care to insinuate that ‘Hanover would not lose *all* its friends’¹¹⁷—a subtle intimation that the Duke was no longer needed as the guardian of His Majesty’s favourite whims. But this was not the end of his manœuvre ; he had the audacity to give the Countess the rough sketch of an administration which would meet with his approval, his own name, of course, heading the list as Secretary of comment ; and the Court in particular was profoundly astonished.—Hardwicke to Royston : Harris, III. 79. Pitt’s exclusiveness in this matter was however hardly one of principle. We are told on the authority of Lord Shelburne that he had once paid court to Lady Hamilton, the mistress of the late Prince of Wales (Fitzmaurice, *Shelburne*, I. 60) ; and, if he generally refrained from trusting Lady Yarmouth, it was probably because he was conscious of his unfitness for political intrigues, and characteristically preferred bolder methods. Yet the man’s ostentatious assumption of righteousness was enough to evoke the astonishment which prevailed.

¹¹⁶ Pitt was doubtless aware that only by negotiating behind Newcastle’s back could he hope to secure acceptance of the terms he had mentioned to Hardwicke. The next best thing to seeing the King—whose humour was, of course, uncertain—was to see Lady Yarmouth.

¹¹⁷ This from the man who had once boldly declared that the Electorate might as well be abandoned until peace should finally restore it, is perhaps a little amusing. But the political value of the present manœuvre is obvious.

State.¹¹⁸ No one was named for the Treasury, perhaps because any occupant would do for that great office, so long as Pitt himself was to be in power; but another notable omission from the list was that of Fox—a point of which the Newcastles took care to acquaint the latter by sending him an account of the paper. Simultaneously the First Lord meditated offering Fox the Pay Office;¹¹⁹ it now seemed so pointedly a measure of charity and condescension.

The premature violence of Pitt was quickly made to cool. The King summoned Hardwicke and told him that ‘what had been suggested was not for his and the public service’. Pitt, being told of it, bowed and voiced a few comments to the effect that any answer at all from His Majesty was a gracious condescension.¹²⁰ Fox was meanwhile busily employed in writing explanations to his friends, in one of which he condemned the Duke’s ‘insolence’ in unqualified terms, and declared that he was ‘intoxicated with his power in the Closet’;¹²¹ while to his nephew he wrote—

¹¹⁸ ‘List of persons . . . delivered to Lady Yarmouth’ (in Pitt’s handwriting): Add. MSS., 35416, f. 124. The document bears the date of October 20, though it was probably not submitted until his visit on the 21st.

¹¹⁹ Fox to Digby, October 25, 1756.

¹²⁰ Minute, Powis House, October 24, 1756: Add. MSS., 35870, f. 263. Pitt’s remarks were made at the conference on the 24th.

¹²¹ Fox to ?, October 22, 1756: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report IX, app., part 1, p. 478.

with very evident relief—that he was ‘going for the last time to a *conciliabulum* of his enemies’.¹²²

The hopes of the Newcastles still hung upon Pitt. On the 24th Hardwicke again received him by appointment, and the latter, after feeling about in the hope that perhaps *some* of his terms were acceptable, reverted to the position which he had taken on the 19th. He insisted, among other things, that an inquiry must be held into the conduct of the war (in which it would be ‘his duty’, he said, ‘to take a considerable share’); and secondly, he must have an equal power with his colleagues as regards measures of the Government—even to the extent (if he so desired) of a right to advise the King separately.

In the highest stage of their political distress the Newcastles were quite unwilling (as yet) to sink to such depths of concession. Hardwicke practically told his guest that such terms were impossible of acceptance, while Pitt, on his side, thought it unreasonable that he should be expected to serve with the Duke of Newcastle, whose administration he had so bitterly censured.¹²³ The First Lord, on hearing these comments, lamented that no greater injustice could be done him than to blame him for that for which he was in no way responsible—namely, the conduct of the war.¹²⁴

¹²² Fox to Digby, October 25, 1756.

¹²³ Minute, Powis House, October 24, 1756.

¹²⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 20, 1756: Harris, III. 80.

The full weight of Newcastle's despair is shown by his last resorts for keeping his sinking fortunes from collapse. Appeal was made to Halifax to accept the doubtful honour; but the Earl's ambition was not willing that his credit should be cheapened.¹²⁵ The Duke then tried Egmont, but he too refused.¹²⁶ Even Granville was importuned again,¹²⁷ and history has unfortunately withheld his reply, which must have been as humiliating as biting wit could make it. Lyttelton, perhaps knowing that his own place was at stake, would have his chief continue without a leader in the Commons,¹²⁸ and it was rumoured about the same time that Fox would be urged to remain.¹²⁹ But to the First Lord's fevered imagination all parties seemed to be conspiring against him. He had persuaded himself that Gower and Devonshire no longer wished him well;¹³⁰ Stone was treated coldly at Leicester House, only too probably on His Grace's account;¹³¹ and Murray frankly censured him for his past treatment of Fox.¹³² There seemed to be nothing now left but to resign, a course which Stone had

¹²⁵ *Memoirs of a Celebrated Character*, p. 82.

¹²⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 96.

¹²⁷ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 83–4.

¹²⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 96.

¹²⁹ Digby to Digby, October 26, 1756: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

¹³⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 14, 1756.

¹³¹ Newcastle to Stone, October 24, 1756.

¹³² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 95. Grafton even went further and urged reconciliation with Fox.—*Ibid.*

suggested¹³³ and Barnard urged.¹³⁴ To save his dignity, it was necessary that the Chancellor should step out with him, and it 'would hurt him extremely', he said, if the latter 'long delayed';¹³⁵ meanwhile his protection before the world must be his 'innocence'.¹³⁶ On the 11th of November, after a series of political fluctuations, during which the Pitt-Devonshire Ministry was being organized, Newcastle tendered his resignation, and Lord Hardwicke, who, in view of his great obligation to the Duke, could not in decency refuse to do likewise, delivered up the great seal and followed his friend into exile eight days later. Lyttelton resigned the seals of the Exchequer to accept a peerage, and Anson, against whom articles of impeachment had been drawn up, was dismissed from the Admiralty. Fox's own resignation took place on the 13th.

Destruction had come at last to the Newcastle Ministry. That ascendancy which the Cumblands had undermined and Newcastle's own incapacity had shattered, was finally demolished by the defection of its chief supporter in the House of Commons. Fox had not clung to a sinking ship for love of its pilot, and when the Duke would have made him as impotent in the Commons as he had

¹³³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 95.

¹³⁴ West to Newcastle, October 23, 1756: Add. MSS., 32868, f. 390.

¹³⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 2, 1756: Harris, III. 82.

¹³⁶ Newcastle to O'Brien, October 21, 1756: Add. MSS., 32868, f. 380.

long been in the Cabinet, the last motive for remaining at his post had disappeared. The Duke of Newcastle had tried, single-handed, to guide the fortunes of the State, had in fact endeavoured to conduct a war, which his own weakness had precipitated, and which, when begun, he had not the requisite talent to wage successfully. There is something almost pathetic in the absolutist aims of a man so innately powerless to realize them. Yet this downfall, of which Fox's rebellion was the immediate occasion, must almost indisputably show that England was not wholly in the clutches of a well-corrupted Commons or a dominated cabinet-clique. The Duke of Newcastle had not forgotten the day when he himself had helped to lay low the despotism of Walpole. There was, in truth, a point when even the power of patronage might be regarded as precarious.

But what of the man who had wrecked the Administration ? Deprived of a career to which talent and interest alike had pointed, what was there now open to the vigorous activity of Fox's mind ? His praiseworthy efforts to build up ministries will be mentioned later ; but can they be regarded as tokens of his real desire ? ' Any employment not of the Cabinet,' he had suggested in his paper to the King. There was one office which might be open to him, one which Newcastle had already almost flaunted in his face, and which, void as it was of glory, rank or chance of great achievement,

had yet in it the lure of incalculable wealth. As Paymaster of the Forces, Fox might soothe his disappointed ambition.¹³⁷

It is on this basis that the present writer believes we must rest Fox's attitude in the Parliamentary session of 1756–7. He was too experienced a politician, too keenly appreciative of the power of corruption, ever to believe that Newcastle's political vitality was gone. Weary of distinction without influence, Fox had sacrificed his ambition for power to his ambition for lucre, and to that intent he had given the Duke a chance to seek shelter in Pitt, who needed for the fulfilment of his own aspirations the power which Newcastle alone could give him. He was well aware at that time that not only would Pitt never submit to the position which

¹³⁷ It might be urged, perhaps, that Fox, as Secretary of State, would certainly be involved—whether justly or unjustly—in the disgrace of his colleagues, and that, in defending the Ministry, he was defending himself. But Fox was not a coward, either in politics or Parliament; his natural impulse would certainly be to let discredit fall on his enemy, Newcastle, and, above all, he had persistently shown his contempt for public opinion. Besides, it was frequently asserted, as we have seen, that Fox had wished to pursue a very different course in the conduct of the war. He might indeed have harangued the Commons in the rôle of a patriot and cast the odium of this year of disaster upon Newcastle and Anson, and though we may think that such a course would have been unpardonable, yet it was quite practicable from a political point of view. But the truth seems to have been that Fox could not hope for the Pay Office if he should deliberately make enemies of the men who had been his colleagues. He felt that he needed the influence of Newcastle.

he himself had held, but that, on the other hand, his great rival in the Commons could never maintain an ascendancy without Newcastle's insured majorities ; and, both these features considered, the independence of genius and the power of patronage, the latter in his belief was the more valuable asset. Hence Fox must not drive the Duke to immoderate lengths. Pitt would no doubt bring his little following into office and look no further, but Newcastle was the man whose influence swayed the Crown. Fox knew that his former colleagues abhorred him ; he knew that they would never willingly oblige him ; but if the King could be moved to grant his wish, and the Duke would see that it was against his own interest to prevent its fulfilment, Fox might consider himself amply paid for the discomfort of defending the late Administration.

The formation and composition of Pitt's Ministry will be considered later ; we shall deal now with its history in Parliament. No one, who was cognizant of politics, could doubt that some sort of an inquiry would be held into the Minorca affair, if for no other reason than to allay the popular discontent. Public opinion might have been exceedingly slow to manifest itself, but now that it had found a cogent medium of expression, the Ministers were, in the minds of sober men, condemned. But the rank and file, the thousands whom Fortune had not favoured with the ability to discriminate, saw in general no further than the

guilty Admiral, whose apparent cowardice had thrown away a victory. That the loss was Minorca, a base of commanding importance in the Mediterranean, was probably not the paramount consideration ; but that a British admiral should fly before a French squadron of inferior strength was a crime for which popular indignation had no fitting epithet. It is not hard to understand the spirit which prompted the violent hand-bill, ‘ Hang Byng or take care of your King ! ’

Parliament opened on the 2nd of December. The King found great delight in criticizing the royal speech, the composition of which had been delegated to Pitt ;¹³⁸ and the tables were turned by an insult in the House of Lords—which we shall have occasion to notice later. It is interesting, however, to note that in the Commons Alderman Beckford made a point of exonerating Fox from the ignominy of his late colleagues ; ‘ there is one,’ he said, ‘ who, I know, has abilities, and would have done better had he not been overwhelmed with the moles of incapacity and inattention.’¹³⁹

One of the first measures of Pitt as a colleague of Devonshire was (if we use Walpole’s phraseology) ‘ to make room in his virtue for Hanover’. On

¹³⁸ The King complained that the draft presented to him was so long that he would not read it through, and so much of it as he did read, he declared ‘ stuff and nonsense’. So Pitt was obliged to condense it.—Holderness to Newcastle, November 22, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32869, f. 120.

¹³⁹ Digby to Digby, December 4, 1756, *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

the 18th of February he brought in the King's message, asking for £200,000 for the support of his Electorate, and the new Secretary had the utmost difficulty in trying to prove himself consistent. Fox's reply was moderate, and, considering the golden opportunity, was strangely void of bitter attacks or gibes ; but he administered some ridicule to his rival by affecting to wish well to his policy—tactics similar to those which he had once employed so effectively against Sir Thomas Robinson ; nor indeed could he refrain from pointing out Pitt's curious situation. 'I have been told indeed,' he said, 'that the German measures of last year would be a millstone about the neck of the Ministers :¹⁴⁰ I hope *this German* measure will be an ornament about the Minister's neck.' His own part, he declared, had been 'a *consistent* one'. Pitt was evidently expected to make some reply, but was discreet enough to confine himself to a few general comments ; he knew that his rival could deal with him unmercifully, if he would. The motion for the grant was seconded by Sackville, who had recently given up Fox for Leicester House ; and after a short debate the money was voted, *nemine contradicente*.¹⁴¹

The case of Byng was, of course, one of the most pressing problems of the new Administration. The two admirals had arrived at Portsmouth on the 24th of July, and were promptly lodged in

¹⁴⁰ See Vol. I, p. 368.

¹⁴¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 141–3.

close confinement, Newcastle and Fox taking particular precautions against a chance of escape.¹⁴² Soon afterwards Admiral West was acquitted of all blame, and his one offence—that of concurring in the decision of the council of war—was apparently not allowed to interfere with the esteem which he gained by comparison with his superior.¹⁴³ The treatment of Byng, on the other hand, is decidedly open to criticism. Since his gross disobedience and neglect of duty were quite sufficient to convict him, it was not only quite useless, but superlatively contemptible for the dependants of the guilty Administration to garble his despatches, and in every way endeavour to prejudice his case.¹⁴⁴ Newcastle had picked him to be a scapegoat for his Ministry, and it was certainly fortunate for them all that the strong case against the Admiral could serve so profitably as a shield for their own blacker guilt.

A court-martial—presided over by Lyttelton's half-brother, Admiral Smith—was held in December, and Byng, having published a paper in his own vindication, was enabled to prove how grossly his reports had been perverted. After a thorough

¹⁴² Newcastle to Cleveland, July 31, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 322.

¹⁴³ There is some reason to believe that this contrast in the treatment of the two admirals was part of the Ministry's design to discredit Byng.

¹⁴⁴ For example, one of his despatches was printed with omission of everything that might possibly count in his favour and against the Ministry.

investigation, Byng was pronounced guilty under the *Twelfth Article of War*, which decreed that any one who, in time of action, failed through cowardice, negligence or disaffection, to do his utmost to defeat the enemy should suffer death. The article had been introduced after the Toulon miscarriage of 1744 to make discipline more rigid, but the court-martial hesitated to comply with the drastic rule and inquired of the Admiralty if the article might be modified. The answer returned was a negative. The court then acquitted the Admiral of treachery or cowardice, but convicted him of negligence, adding an appeal to the royal mercy.

The case did not reach the Admiralty until the 16th of February, when it was received from the King in council. The Board, including its First Commissioner, Lord Temple, was unanimous in signing the verdict with the exception of Admiral Forbes, who did not believe that Byng's motive was negligence.¹⁴⁵ This was contrary, of course, to the spirit of the article, but it would seem as though a technicality such as this might have sufficed, if Temple had really cared to have the court's decision reversed.

On the following day the sentence was communicated to the Commons, Byng being himself a

¹⁴⁵ In other words, that cowardice alone would be the cause of such negligence; and if they acquitted him of the former, they could not sustain the latter.—Extracts relating to Admiral Byng, Brit. Mus., cat. no. 2805, g. 1.

member of the House. The Speaker brought on discussion by suggesting the Admiral's expulsion—a proposal which was warmly opposed by Dashwood, who moved that the letter of the court-martial be read. Fox promptly objected that such would be in the light of a censure, and after Pitt had made a short speech, reflecting on the integrity of the court-martial, Fox quietly called for the order of the day, and the motion was not renewed.¹⁴⁶

A week later, Dashwood, in no way daunted by his initial failure, moved a consideration of the *Twelfth Article*, and much discussion followed. It was pointed out, among other things, that the execution could not take place, until the Admiralty had considered the case and endorsed the sentence. Pitt made answer, but was ably refuted; and Fox then censured the Admiralty for not acquainting the King with any favourable circumstances, if it had found that such existed.¹⁴⁷ The procedure was customary, he said, and any one of the Board might have done so; 'Admiral Forbes might,' he added significantly. The first debates had already shown that Fox—in interesting contrast to his defence of Lestock—was

¹⁴⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 139–40.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. II. 145–50. 'Fox,' writes Walpole, 'had fastened the duty of representation on the Admiralty . . . if they did not (apply for mercy), the King remained in possession of pleading that as the Admiralty had made no application for mercy, after being publicly exhorted to it, it was evident that they had no favourable circumstances to represent.'—Ibid. II. 152.

carefully striving to defeat any purpose of saving the Admiral.

At this juncture, Captain Keppel, a cousin of Fox and a member of the court-martial, told Horace Walpole that the report was quite true that certain of his colleagues had something of importance to disclose, and wished to be absolved from their oath of secrecy. Grenville had already been solicited to this end, but declined to 'meddle with the affair'. Walpole appealed to Fox, who evaded the proposal and quickly left the House. Since, then, no time was to be lost, the former hurried to Dashwood, who immediately brought up the question, and it was decided that Keppel should consult his colleagues, in order to report upon the matter intelligently.¹⁴⁸

On the next day (the 26th) a full Cabinet met hastily at Devonshire House and recommended postponing the execution of the sentence until March 14th.¹⁴⁹ Pitt, when he had entered the Closet to report the result, brought up as his excuse that the House of Commons favoured a pardon. 'Sir,' replied the Monarch, derisively, 'You have taught me to look for the sense of my

¹⁴⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 153-7. Walpole gives a graphic account of the episode. The motion for adjournment had actually been put when Dashwood interrupted the Speaker. This was on February 25. The House was not to sit on the next day or on Sunday, and the execution was to take place on Monday, the 28th.

¹⁴⁹ Minute of meeting, Devonshire House, February 26, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32997, f. 127.

subjects in another place than in the House of Commons.' It was a clever thrust at the popular hero's inconsistencies. But the King did in the end consent to a respite ; while in the meantime Bedford heard of Pitt's indiscretion and informed Fox through Rigby.

Pitt then returned to the House of Commons and delivered the royal message ; which was, in effect, that His Majesty, 'having been informed that a member of the House of Commons' (who was also a member of the court-martial) had 'in his place' requested absolution from the oath, would accordingly respite the sentence, but was determined that it should be carried out, unless it should be shown that the Admiral was unjustly condemned.

Fox was instantly on his feet to deliver the attack he had planned. He desired, he said, to have the message read again—there were words in it that struck his ear in a very extraordinary manner : '*The King having been informed that a member in his place.*' 'Who informed him ?' he exclaimed. 'Who betrayed to the Crown what was said in Parliament ? What Minister was so *ignorant* as to advise the Crown to take notice of having had such intelligence ? Do Ministers dare avow that they made representations of the speeches of particular men ? Indeed it had now been done for a laudable purpose ; but by the same rule might be practised for a bad one ; and on no account must be suffered to strengthen into a precedent.' It was a consequence, Fox

felt, most dangerous to liberty of debate and freedom of speech.

Pitt responded with anger that the time had been too pressing to consider precedents ; the case was its own precedent. He had been doing his duty in the House the day before, had heard the ‘ momentous doubts ’ of Keppel, and had mentioned them. He ‘ should have been ashamed to run away basely and timidly, and hide his head, as if he had murdered somebody under a hedge ’. He had complied with the sense of the House, and could rely on the Speaker to make an entry that would not be regarded as a precedent.

Onslow, whose habit of compromising was in a measure responsible for his popularity as Speaker, sustained strongly the contention of Fox that it was a breach of privilege, and a most dangerous one ; but he defended the spirit which had actuated it, and promised to enter it as Pitt had suggested.

Fox then rose with perfect coolness, and in spite of the attack, which he had in some degree merited, declared that he would say nothing to the honourable gentleman’s charge, but would be content with proving his own conduct good-natured ; had he said some things that the other had said, he would indeed have thought his nature base.

Fox had not Pitt’s impulsiveness, nor his ungovernable temper, and his policy was at this time to cavil and exasperate. After suggesting, without success, that the House should await a petition from the court-martial, he asked somewhat later

'if it were proper that a set of judges should go about for six weeks, hearing solicitations from friends of the prisoner, and then come and complain of their own sentence'; he did not believe, moreover, that any member of the court-martial should be permitted to make public the sentiments of those who were for concealing them. As for himself, he had 'run away' because compassion struggled with reason (a statement which, we must confess, is extremely hard to believe). He promised to vote for the motion (that of absolving from the oath), though disagreeing with Pitt that the best results would follow a pardon; and in no case would he favour compelling any one to divulge his opinion, if he were disinclined to do so.

Pitt then resumed the debate, and made a passionate appeal for the Admiral; but he acknowledged that, like Fox, he wished there were better ground for action by the Commons, and sought shelter in the assertion that the whole House had shared his irresistible impulse.¹⁵⁰

In the proceedings which followed, both on this day and on the 28th, Fox was continually on the alert to keep the members from allowing their impulses to master their discretion. It was known before the second day of debate on the Court-Martial Bill that Keppel's colleagues had not sustained him, and the dumbfounded Secretary knew what good use Fox would make of this untoward event. It

¹⁵⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.* II. 157-63; West to Newcastle: Add. MSS., 32870, f. 218.

turned out as Pitt feared. Keppel was rigidly cross-examined by the man who had once been Secretary-at-War, and admitted that what he had to divulge was *not* ‘something great’ or ‘what His Majesty should know’. ‘I am satisfied,’ said Fox, with dignity. ‘Afterwards I shall propose means to prevent such bills for the future.’¹⁵¹

It was readily shown by the determined prosecutor that not even a majority of the members of the court-martial who were in town were actually willing to support Keppel’s plea, and although Fox, in his determination to get speedily to the point, tried without success to have the two or three examined who were alleged to favour the bill, little doubt could have been actually entertained, but that the matter would end as it did. Charles Townshend, who was either as eccentric as people in general regarded him, or else more independent than most of his contemporaries in politics, infuriated Pitt by warmly complimenting Fox, who then rose in a spirit of ridicule and said that he was ‘glad Mr. Pitt had heard commendation of him from Mr. Townshend’.

‘I wish you joy of him,’ retorted Pitt, loudly enough for half of the House to hear.

‘By his (Pitt’s) wishing to continue in the Administration a twelvemonth,’ continued Fox, ‘he seems to think he *can* save the country’¹⁵² . . . had

¹⁵¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 168–72.

¹⁵² A sarcastic allusion to Pitt’s famous remark to Devonshire. The country had, of course, not yet been ‘saved’—in the sense that Pitt had meant it.

I *totidem verbis* proposed some question that had been opposed last year, it would have been opposed again.' But whatever weight the repeated attacks upon Pitt may have possessed in the minds of the House, the bill was finally passed by a large majority.¹⁵³

On March 1 the Court-Martial Bill was considered by the Lords, and, led by such men as Mansfield and Hardwicke, the Lords were easily convinced that the House of Commons had acted upon impulse and faulty judgement. Hardwicke, from his wonted procrastination,¹⁵⁴ tried apparently to thwart the bill and it has been alleged that his desire for Byng's execution was actuated by the stigma that had fallen upon his son-in-law.¹⁵⁵ But both the Chief Justice and the former Chancellor could weigh the question with sound and dispassionate judgement, and the result was the failure of the bill to pass the Upper House.

Chesterfield remarked cynically (in writing of the great controversy), 'Neither the public service, nor the life of a fellow, enter into the consideration of either side.'¹⁵⁶ But this was hardly true of Pitt.

¹⁵³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 172-4.

¹⁵⁴ According to Walpole, Hardwicke tried to postpone consideration of the bill in favour of a case of trifling importance; but so great was the former's hatred of Hardwicke that the story may not be exactly as related, in spite of His Lordship's habits of procrastination.

¹⁵⁵ Autobiography of Shelburne: Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, I. 82.

¹⁵⁶ Chesterfield to Dayrolles, February 28, 1757, *Correspondence of Chesterfield*, III. 1165.

Hard as the Great Commoner found it to reconcile his belief in the *Twelfth Article* with his desire to save Byng, it enraged him to feel that the guilt of the Ministry was protected by that of the Admiral. He did not say, and it is not necessary to believe, that he regarded the sentence as unjust; but a certain desire for 'fair play', which underlay his somewhat tyrannical nature, led him to shrink from seeing Newcastle's scapegoat hanged.¹⁵⁷ Yet there was one point which his impulsive mind quite overlooked. Fox saw, as Pitt should have seen, that the integrity of all courts-martial was at stake. As Secretary-at-War the former had earnestly supported the oath of secrecy, warmly deprecating all possible infringements; and a sentence of condemnation once given, the fate of the offender should rest singly with the King.

What would the Sovereign do? Of Fox's opinion we know nothing beyond his expressions in the Commons; his wife, however, suggested that the King might order the Admiral's execution, but connive at his escape. Bedford and even Cumberland were in favour of pardon, the former going so far as to wait upon the King on the Admiral's

¹⁵⁷ Pitt might possibly have gained Byng's pardon from the King by threatening resignation, but he was probably so confident in the influence he could exert over the Commons that he refrained from attempting that ruse which he tried on two later occasions for causes less commendable. He forgot in his impulsiveness that the Lords might thwart his purpose.

behalf.¹⁵⁸ Lyttelton, on the other hand, had joined his fellow ministers in treating the case as party capital, and, before the court-martial met, he had written to his half-brother in the strongest terms of the grounds and the justice of condemning him.¹⁵⁹ Hardwicke, as we find, had given advice in ‘instructing’ their friends in the Commons ;¹⁶⁰ and Newcastle’s merciless programme has already been revealed. Whatever Anson, perhaps the guiltiest of them all, had to say in this connexion, is not in evidence, although he is said to have treated Byng with much spite.¹⁶¹ Possibly the ex-chief of the Admiralty felt that silence was his best device.

The King had been furious at the treatment of his message consequent upon the indiscretion of his Secretary, and none of the subsequent incidents were likely to arouse his clemency ; when, finally, Earl Temple, a man of Pitt’s arrogant temper, but far outstripping his friend in insolence, had the audacity to reflect upon His Majesty’s bravery in the past, the King needed no further inducement to refuse a pardon. Temple turned his back

¹⁵⁸ Rigby to Bedford, February 3, 1757 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 230.

¹⁵⁹ Lyttelton to Smith, January 31, 1756 : Phillimore, II. 584.

¹⁶⁰ Hardwicke to Newcastle, February 19, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 194. (The letter shows much resentment against the Commons for ‘intermeddling’ with the affair.)

¹⁶¹ Walpole to Mann, November 29, 1756 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 15.

upon the Closet where his impulsive anger had left its mark, and the flood of petitions for pardon henceforth found the King unmoved.

On the 14th of March Byng met his death with praiseworthy bravery. His greatest comfort had been the acquittal of cowardice ; and coward he certainly was not, however much a lack of administrative courage had contributed to a national disgrace.

There were now the accomplices of Byng to be dealt with, the men who unquestionably shared his guilt, and who hid behind Fox's adroitness in debate. It was evidently expected of the new Ministers that they would secure the impeachment of their predecessors ; and such was their natural course. But in February circumstances came into play which made an earnest and impartial inquiry quite out of the question. The Townshend brothers, the younger of whom had formerly threatened to expose the Ministry in its dealings with the Colonies, were the chief prosecutors of the new charge, but Charles, in this present case, had shown so little animation that the Newcastles had at one time believed he could be engaged to defend their own cause.¹⁶² Though at first eager to deal with the American aspect as well, the elder brother finally confined the investigations to the question of Minorca ; and it is possible that he feared, as some did, that his

¹⁶² West to Newcastle, March 14, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 275.

great-uncle, Newcastle, whom Charles had recently attacked with much severity,¹⁶³ would be driven to reunite with Fox.

When Townshend called for papers before the examination, there was so little interest manifested that no committee was appointed to conduct the inquiry, and no one empowered to prepare evidence. ‘Mr. Pitt,’ writes Horace Walpole, ‘protracted a commodious gout; George Townshend, the other mock-champion of the people, was negotiating with Lord Granby to unite the patriot Minister with the late chief of the criminal Administration.’¹⁶⁴

On the 22nd of March George Townshend moved for various papers, and Fox made a motion that all of them should be considered on the 19th of April, which Doddington declared in his diary was ‘evidently throwing the inquiry into contempt’.¹⁶⁵ Dashwood, lately so eager to save the life of Byng, complained that the date set interfered with the races at Newmarket; but, fortunately for the reputation of the House, the objection was not

¹⁶³ The case had been an attack on a contract for furnishing troops in America. Fox, as usual, defended the late Ministry, and made, in Rigby’s opinion, the best speech the latter had ever heard, and one which ‘met with universal praise’.—Rigby to Bedford, February 7, 1757: *Bedford Corres.* II. 234. Fox having called for an inquiry, the case came up again on March 14, and again Fox defended the late Ministry—which easily won the day.—West to Newcastle, March 14, 1757.

¹⁶⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.* II. 135.

¹⁶⁵ Doddington, *Diary*, March 22, 1757.

sustained.¹⁶⁶ Pitt was either absent or silent. Presumably the gout was still ‘commodious’.

The inquiry finally commenced (April 19) and lasted six wearisome days, each time till past midnight. ‘It would be ridiculous,’ wrote Walpole, ‘to enter into the detail of a pantomime from which nothing was intended, expected or produced.’ There was no degree of system employed in formulating a procedure or presenting the facts; and there had been every chance for the slaves and sycophants of Newcastle to pervert, embellish, or make omissions in the evidence. When divisions took place on various points, the usual Newcastle majority came to the rescue of their menaced patron; and only once did they show any bashfulness: when the leaders, growing bolder, proposed that it be affirmed that no greater strength could have been sent to the Mediterranean—then the margin shrank to 78, and an intended vote of approbation was consequently dropped.¹⁶⁷ As was said by a humorous member of the minority, ‘To their great astonishment, the late Cabinet is not thanked parliamentarily for having lost Minorca.’¹⁶⁸

Fox was instrumental in managing the case for the Ministry, but seeing no disposition on the part of his great rival to feel the keen edge of his sarcasm, he ventured only occasionally some word

¹⁶⁶ West to Newcastle, March 22, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32890, f. 309.

¹⁶⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.* II. 204.

¹⁶⁸ Walpole to Mann, May 5, 1757 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 50.

of defence for his late colleagues or some slight obstruction to the lukewarm prosecutors. Pitt was present on two of the days, dressed in the highest degree of ostentation. But his voice had been better silent. When he spoke, he charged the loss of Minorca to the whole Government, 'for the whole Government could not be punished ;'¹⁶⁹ the negligence which he had so often scathingly attacked seemed nothing to him now but one of the casual calamities of an official career ; in short, he 'swallowed camels and haggled about gnats,'¹⁷⁰ and, whatever may be the standpoint, a great opportunity was lost. The self-chosen and reputed champion of the people had thrown away the chance of bringing their ministers to justice, and making an eloquent example for all future administrations. So, in the face of bitter public condemnation, the Duke of Newcastle and his fellow ministers were publicly exonerated by a nerveless Parliament and the passive resistance of a man who proved his insincerity. Byng had had a debt to pay to military ideals, but his superiors had committed an offence which they should have expiated to the nation.

One other measure of the session should receive at least passing mention. In January a new militia bill was introduced by General Conway, and passed eventually by both Houses. Fox, who is sometimes to be seen in a more favourable light than a mere political mouthpiece, gave his entire

¹⁶⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 204-7.

¹⁷⁰ Walpole to Mann, May 5, 1757.

support to the measure.¹⁷¹ But such had been only an interlude in his chief task. The Newcastle Ministry might never realize how much they owed to his exertions in the two great incidents—the inquiry, and the attempt to save Byng. But Fox had resolved upon his course, and had carried it out ; he had now only to wait—and hope.

¹⁷¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 132.

CHAPTER VIII

PROJECTOR OF MINISTRIES

‘I THINK’ wrote Sir George Hanbury to his brother at St. Petersburg, ‘the Pelham hour has come and Mr. Fox will repay good Lord Orford’s score.’¹ The deduction was correct. Two political crises in the history of the Newcastle Ministry had been surmounted by the timely assistance of Fox, but nothing had availed to prevent the ruin of the third, for Fox himself had caused the Ministry’s overthrow. And yet there is something suggestive of the destinies of a Samson in Fox’s belated destruction of the power of the Newcastles, and Hardwicke’s dry reasoning may well have carried conviction: ‘I think Mr. Fox has turned us out and himself too.’² The truth is, Fox had ‘repaid’ both Orford and himself—at the expense of his public career.

In the crucial weeks following Fox’s declaration to the King, and while the official days of the Newcastles seemed numbered, the outgoing secretary was still loth to consider himself politically

¹ Hanbury to Williams, November 1756: *Letters to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams*, Stone MSS. (Brit. Mus.), 263.

² Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 31, 1756: Add. MSS., 32868, f. 505.

dead, when the prize he really wanted was so far from being assured. To this end he applied to Walpole, in the hope of sending intelligence to Pitt that he 'would be willing to unite with him'. But Walpole, whom jealousy of Rigby's conduct had gradually alienated from his fellow-Cumberlands, politely declined his friend's request;³ while in the meantime Fox had enjoyed a stormy interview with the King;⁴ and only Pitt was supremely happy, for the Newcastles were begging in vain for his charity.⁵ Every one expected Fox and Pitt to unite,⁶ few realizing that of all men in the world of politics, these two men of the Commons were the least capable of union. Still, since neither of them could expect to stand alone, and the Duke of Newcastle 'was as if he had never been', there was some reason for the prevalence of the above expectation; and could the principals have brought themselves to agree upon the terms of their mutual relationship, no firmer administration could have been formed.

But should Pitt refuse to be reasonable, and should Fox be held to his promise to retain the 'lead' for the coming session,⁷ the position of the

³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 90.

⁴ Page 43.

⁵ Pages 44, 48.

⁶ Lyttelton to Lyttelton, November 25, 1756: Phillimore, *Memoirs of Lyttelton*, II. 533.

⁷ It will be remembered (page 42) that Fox—probably at the request of the King—had consented, if necessary, to retain his office, together with the management of the Commons, for one more session.

latter would be both isolated and hopeless. ‘I heartily wish Pitt may come,’ he wrote in one of his moments of brooding over prospects in the Commons, ‘I shall be a minister in the House who shall be known not to intend to remain. The D. of N. will be a minister who, they must know, cannot remain. Mr. Pitt opposing both. Who are the members to look up to? Who is to combine and direct the majority, and, my God, upon what points? If Pitt don’t come, what can I do?’⁸ Such was the anxiety of a man who had neither pity for his late tormentors, nor affection for his haughty rival, nor yet any longer a desire for a distinguished career for himself; but there was one man whom he must not disoblige if ever the Pay Office were to be his, and that was the King. For the present he consulted Bedford in his quandary,⁹ and the latter told him not to think of remaining longer¹⁰—profitless advice, considering the chaos in the government. It was verily a puzzling situation, and there seemed at present but one way out—and that was Pitt.

While all parties were pondering, and few knew anything beyond the fact that the Ministry were preparing for flight, the Duke of Marlborough

⁸ Fox to Digby (letter undated), *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII, app., part 1, p. 220.

⁹ Ibid.; Fox dined with Bedford on the 23rd, and then discussed the situation more fully with him.—*Bedford Corres.* II. 203.

¹⁰ Fox to Digby, October 20, 1756: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

thought he saw a chance for promoting the waning fortunes of Holland House, by urging Bedford to mediate between Fox and Pitt, as by no one, he said, could the union be so effectually brought about.¹¹ The action was commendable, and showed that His Majesty was not yet wholly deserted ; but the friend of Fox did not realize that ere Bedford could signify his compliance, the contemplated task would be rendered useless.

While everything was in a state of uncertainty Fox received a summons from the King, and the 27th of October saw him closeted with the one man who controlled his fate. Of course no one at such a time as this could afford to be unduly confident, and His Majesty showed a marked tendency to forget the audience of the 18th.¹² He began immediately with the words : ‘The Duke of Newcastle whom you hate will retire.’ Fox’s political caution bade him lie—he felt ‘no resentment against His Grace’. The King then owned that he had sent to Pitt, and that the treaty was at an end, probably adding that he had himself refused to consider the great orator’s demands ; he then asked Fox in the first place to seek an interview with Pitt himself and see if some union could not be effected ‘in terms of common sense at least’, and secondly, to speak to such persons as he should think proper to co-operate in a new plan of administration. Fox naturally

¹¹ Marlborough to Bedford, October 26, 1756: *Bedford Corres.* II. 204.

¹² See p. 43.

thought of the old Cumberland Party, and mentioned Bedford, Marlborough and Devonshire among others ; but of himself he said little. The King repeatedly pressed him to demand some office as his own reward, but Fox answered that he was ‘ready to support His Majesty’s Government in any capacity he should think proper, but that it was in vain to talk of places till they had agreed upon measures’.¹³ The conference was a long one, and for Fox, most gratifying, but there was too little vanity in his nature for him to deceive himself with false hopes or premature encouragement. ‘I will do anything,’ he wrote to Sackville the next day, ‘to join with Pitt.’¹⁴

Fox lost no time in performing his mission. The Prince of Wales held his first levee on the next day, and both the great rivals repaired to Saville House. Fox having arrived too late for the formalities, the Prince met him on the top of the stairs and greeted him civilly as he went out.¹⁵ A few minutes later Fox met Pitt in one of the landing-places of the staircase, and embraced the opportunity of acquainting him with the King’s wishes. Two accounts¹⁶ are extant of the inter-

¹³ Digby to Digby, October 28, 1756 : *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII. Fox showed considerable shrewdness in masking his own ambition while results were so uncertain.

¹⁴ Fox to Sackville, October 28, 1756 : Stopford-Sackville MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report IX (octavo).

¹⁵ Digby to Digby, October 28, 1756.

¹⁶ *Memoirs of a Celebrated Character* (Richard Glover), p. 90 ; Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 97.

view which took place, neither of which credits Pitt with ordinary courtesy : according to his friend, Glover, the refractory statesman told his rival that when His Majesty should send one who might be ‘entitled to his confidence and esteem’, he would not be remiss in his expressions of compliance. Naturally one of Newcastle’s spies was on the watch, and the Duke was told that the two ‘did not seem to part amicably’.

The improvised interview had lasted twenty minutes,¹⁷ and Pitt refused to consent to another.¹⁸ To Bedford Fox wrote that he could hardly blame him, as it would certainly appear that he (Fox) in such circumstances would receive the Treasury, and Pitt ‘would be but Paymaster to another Pelham with a higher rank’.¹⁹ Meanwhile the belief generally prevailed that the Junior Secretary of State would succeed the Duke of Newcastle as First Minister.

But Fox was far from considering this probable. Pitt having refused to co-operate, his only resource seemed now to be the capture of enough of his rival’s associates to weaken the latter’s footing and tarnish his vanity. That evening he consulted Cumberland at Windsor Lodge,²⁰ presumably with

¹⁷ West to Newcastle, October 28, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 451. ¹⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 97.

¹⁹ Fox to Bedford, October 30, 1756 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 205. In other words, Pitt’s office of Secretary of State would be subordinate in influence to that of Fox at the Treasury ; and he regards Fox as one of Newcastle’s henchmen, of all of whom he wished to be independent.

²⁰ Digby to Digby, October 28, 1756.

regard to his prospects, and the method of procedure to be employed in dealing with Leicester House. Bute was undeniably under obligations to Fox for the gratification of his wish, and, although the King had refused to bestow the key upon him personally (sending it through the Duke of Grafton²¹), the Earl could afford to let Royalty enjoy the pleasure of fruitless abuse. Why Fox did not seek to win Bute is hard to conjecture, unless he felt that the Princess's implacable hatred would render it useless. Instead of that, he made overtures to Legge who replied by snubbing him ;²² and some conversation with Bute soon afterward confirmed his suspicion that Pitt's action had been in full concert with Leicester House.²³ Results such as these were not of a kind to inspire courage ; yet Fox did not entirely despair of relieving the King's mind. In a later audience he declared that 'at last and worst he would take the Treasury himself or go to the Tower rather than they should shave His Majesty's head'. 'Ah,' ejaculated the King, 'if you go to the Tower, I shall not be long behind you.'²⁴ The Sovereign knew that the man whom he had alienated could help him, but altruism and clemency were as foreign to Pitt's nature as patriotism was to that of his rival.

²¹ The King slipped it into the Duke's pocket.—Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 79–80.

²² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 99–100.

²³ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756 : Stone MSS. (Brit. Mus.), 263.

²⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 100.

Fox told his friends that the impending downfall of 'Newcastle & Co.' had served to reconcile Pitt and Bute,²⁵ who were said to have quarrelled during the summer.²⁶ At any rate, whatever the Scottish lord or the Princess may have thought, they acted the part of discretion for once, and there was no thought of holding out a helping hand to the retiring First Minister to whom policy as well as dislike kept the door tightly closed. Even the talk of Fox's elevation fell as seed upon stony ground. Had the wrath of Leicester House against the Cumberlands moderated, or was it trusting implicitly in the fortunes of its masterful protégé in the Commons?

On the 30th the Duke of Devonshire came to town, and the King authorized him to try to form an Administration, of which he himself should be head—then adding (with what feelings we can imagine!) that he should confer with Pitt to see if he would not relent and 'accommodate' with Fox.²⁷ Now the dreaded genius of the Commons had had enough already to turn the head of one far less ambitious than himself. Soon after Fox's mani-

²⁵ Fox to Digby, October 25, 1756 : *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

²⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 2, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32867, f. 175. Why Bute and Pitt had fallen out is not made clear, and the statement is wholly on the authority of Fox, who had, however, some acquaintance with Bute in the course of his efforts to get the stoles for the latter.

²⁷ Walpole to Mann, November 4, 1756 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 7.

festo the ever-vigilant Potter had informed his friend that the report was current that the Treasury should be his ;²⁸ then had come the overtures—not flattering perhaps, but nevertheless delightful—from Claremont, followed soon afterwards by Fox's message from the King. But if his enemies had only known it, Pitt was as anxious to come into office as his suitors were to have him ; and now that the Treasury was to pass from Newcastle to the timid and unaspiring Devonshire, he condescended to treat with them in rather more moderate tones. Yet he absolutely refused to serve with Fox as a minister, and insisted both that he himself should have the Seals, and that all who had followed him out of office should be reinstated.²⁹ This last demand was naturally dictated by loyalty ; the first was all that concerned Fox, and was the only detail of which the latter was informed that night, but he determined to consult Sackville on the morrow, when he hoped to know more.³⁰

On Monday, the 1st of November, Bedford, Marlborough and Rigby dined by appointment with Fox at the 'King's Head' in Kensington, and, after the meal was finished and Rigby had left, the greater dignitaries proceeded to confer with Devonshire, who had just come in, and the prospects

²⁸ Potter to Pitt, October 17, 1756 : *Chatham Corres.* I. 178.

²⁹ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756.

³⁰ Fox to Sackville, October 30, 1756 : Stopford-Sackville MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

and principles of the old Cumberland junto were thoroughly threshed out. The new arrival described his interview with Pitt and condemned the leader's 'impracticability'; nevertheless, while expressing his own predilection for Fox, he said that he was willing to accede to Pitt's demands, saving the proposition to give Legge the seals of the Exchequer—to this he could not consent;³¹ meanwhile since their enemies 'had not presumption enough to name the First Lord of the Treasury', it was hoped by the quartet that the nomination of Devonshire for the chief office, and the influence of Fox in the Commons, would keep the arrogant dictator within reasonable bounds.³² 'In this unpleasant situation,' wrote Bedford to his inquisitive Duchess, 'things were last night when I parted from Mr. Fox at half-past one.'³³

The days which followed the first negotiation with Pitt were full of the purposes and cross-purposes, moves and counter-moves of the several great figures, who must to some degree repress their interests and partialities, if ever they were to coalesce in a practicable union. Yet there seemed so little hope of this when the new month was ushered in, that the opening of Parliament

³¹ The reason for Legge's unpopularity is not stated. Perhaps Devonshire knew his reputation for intriguing and wanted a more disinterested Chancellor of the Exchequer.

³² This was expressed before Devonshire made his appearance.

³³ Bedford to the Duchess, November 2, 1756: *Bedford Corres.* II. 206.

was put off a fortnight.³⁴ and even then a whole month seemed too short a time to bring the pride of politicians to reason. Legge no sooner found out that he was picked by Pitt for restoration, than he began to wonder if his dignity would let him be content with another term as Chancellor of the Exchequer instead of claiming the Treasury. Not, however, having the vanity that blinds so many men to their own deficiencies, that master-intriguer decided to assure Devonshire of his condescension.³⁵ Fox, consulted upon the list which Pitt had shown to Lady Yarmouth, sent the prospective First Lord a plan of his own, the most significant feature of which was his own name for the Pay Office.³⁶ Doddington was naturally interested in these incessant oscillations in politics —the more vitally inasmuch as his own fortune might be set on the pyre of the falling Ministry—and disagreed with Hillsborough's opinion that the Court would not submit to the Great Commoner ;³⁷ while, far remote from the hubbub of gossip that sought only the rising planets, the little court at Newcastle House was kept carefully informed of all the chances and changes that befell the coming Administration. On the 2nd the faithful Holdernesse wrote to his chief that '*Les Rénardins* (Fox's

³⁴ Walpole to Mann, November 4, 1756 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 7.

³⁵ Wilmot to Devonshire : Torrens, *History of British Cabinets*, II. 328.

³⁶ Ibid. (from the Devonshire papers).

³⁷ Doddington, *Diary*, November 2, 1756.

adherents) are not so sanguine as they have been', and 'sound high the unreasonableness of Pitt';³⁸ and the Secretary had gathered the day before from an interview with Devonshire that the latter had 'a very indifferent opinion of his negotiations with Mr. Pitt'.³⁹ Meanwhile the appointed head of the coming Administration was in very fact most reluctant to undertake the task that lay before him,⁴⁰ and Fox's efforts at ministry-making having met with early disaster, the whole weight of responsibility fell upon the shoulders of the timid peer.

On the morning of November 2, the day after 'Fox's cabinet' (to quote Walpole) had met to review the situation, the Duke of Bedford, on the strength of the other's assurances of a royal welcome, attended the King's levee and afterwards entered the Closet. The King was not only glad to see His Grace, but hardly gave him a chance to utter a word, so jubilant did he seem at an opportunity of railing against Pitt and the insolent treatment of himself. Had the Sovereign then known what he was to learn a few minutes later, it would be amusing to conjecture what lucid expletives the royal tongue would have invented. It seems that a sudden turn had come to the

³⁸ Holderness to Newcastle, November 2, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 542.

³⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 2, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 540. Possibly Fox had encouraged him to believe that agreement with Pitt was hopeless.

⁴⁰ Fox to Sackville, November 4, 1756 : Stopford-Sackville MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

negotiation by a letter which Devonshire received that morning from Pitt, in which the latter proposed first that the much-detested Temple should be raised to the Admiralty, secondly, that Holderness (who had become unpopular by reason of his defence of a Hanoverian soldier against popular prejudice⁴¹) should be superseded by Pitt himself in the northern department, while, thirdly, Sir Thomas Robinson (once called by implication a ‘ jack-boot ’)⁴² should receive a peerage and the seals that Fox was about to relinquish.⁴³ Thus had the self-valuation of Pitt reached a climax.

Fortunately the Lord President’s gift of brilliant originality was seldom known to fail in a crisis. Apprised of this manœuvre on the part of the man they all needed but none desired, Granville followed Bedford in the Closet and presented a plan, drawn by himself, which was to be practically a counter-move by the Sovereign. The new paper proposed, in

⁴¹ Holderness (probably by the King’s order) had arbitrarily ordered the release of a Hanoverian soldier who had committed a small theft—rather through ignorance of the English language than from any intention to do so. As the German troops, and the necessary billeting which their presence involved, were very sore points with the populace, the Senior Secretary soon found himself the object of considerable public hatred, the more so because Pitt characteristically took the popular side of the question. The episode had taken place during the late summer of the previous year.

⁴² See chap. iii, note 39. Pitt’s desire to have as colleague the man he had once so openly despised, rather savours of Newcastle’s methods of picking ministers.

⁴³ Pitt to Devonshire, November 2, 1756 : Torrens, II. 329.

short, that Devonshire should be First Lord, and Fox, Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Pitt should be Secretary of State, and Legge, a peer ; while the other demands of the former were to be taken into consideration by Devonshire and Fox.⁴⁴ The new project appeared to be well received, and His Majesty became so furious at the demands of Pitt that he could not bear the thought of his coming near him.

Granville, in leaving the Closet, acquainted Fox and Bedford with the King's intended ultimatum, and the broadminded statesman of Woburn declared it 'replete with good sense', and to be such as Pitt could not 'reasonably refuse'—although he believed the latter would do so ; and, if so, it would 'plainly put him in the wrong'. Devonshire had meanwhile gone to the King and so far supported the plan that he would accept no other. A meeting was then fixed for the following evening at Devonshire House.⁴⁵

Meanwhile Fox thought the crisis sufficiently acute for dealing his old rival a harder blow than the others had intended, and, forsaking for the moment his underlying object, he succumbed to the temptation of fighting for his old power. The ingenious plan which he now concocted was a meeting of the chief members of both Houses at Lord Granville's, at which the exorbitance of Pitt's demands should be set forth, and a message sent to the latter that the King would name his own Treasury—a proposal which of course meant

⁴⁴ Granville's Plan, November 3, 1756 : Torrens, II. 331.

⁴⁵ Bedford to the Duchess, November 2, 1756.

Devonshire and Fox ; and finally, if this counter-declaration were not accepted, the man they all hated should be set at defiance. Fox even went so far as to urge Bedford to accept Ireland, since in case these three friends could weather the coming session, the moving spirit of the trio might succeed to the headship of the Treasury. But, like many a project that is intended to be secret, the contemplated intrigue in some way leaked out, and Walpole, doubting if Fox could succeed in his aim, and fearful lest a crisis should be reached in which Pitt would be alienated for ever (an almost inconceivable condition) sent a message the following morning to Devonshire exposing the actual import of the plot.⁴⁶ Curiously enough, on the previous evening the Duke had determined to abandon his purpose to become First Lord of the Treasury upon any condition whatsoever. It would seem that the straightforward and well-intentioned peer had found the complexity of demands and intrigues too much for his patience.

The next morning (November 3) the Duke completely revoked his determination,⁴⁷ although whether instigated by reason or courage must remain in obscurity ; and, probably after receiving the communication of Walpole, he set out for the Court. The political world was moving fast upon

⁴⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 102-3. Walpole dearly loved to have his self-important finger in any political imbroglio, even if it meant the betrayal of a friend.

⁴⁷ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756.

its axis during these eventful days, and Holderness, whose insignificance might have led some people to forget him, came now to the front with the announcement that he should be willing to resign, but not as punishment for an offence he had never committed, and anyway not until his innocence should be proved.⁴⁸ Of course the Senior Secretary could be turned out, but this might have been rather shabby treatment of one who had served for nearly five years, even though he did belong to the 'old order'.

When the Lord Lieutenant entered the Closet, he at once signified his acceptance of the Treasury⁴⁹ (it being understood that the original proposal had been to release him at the end of the session⁵⁰) and in addition consented to all Pitt's demands except the proposed removal of Holderness. Fox, who appears to have been present, must have been dumbfounded at the frustration of his plans, but he was too true a friend of Devonshire's to emulate his rival's tendency to sulk, and he was too wary a politician to bring on a useless quarrel when good behaviour might land him in the Pay Office. Yet he was also shrewd enough to decline the latter now, when his friend, remembering the list which Fox had sent him, speedily offered him the place he coveted.⁵¹ It is true he

⁴⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.* II. 101.

⁴⁹ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756.

⁵⁰ Devonshire's notes on his own Administration : Torrens, II. 326.

⁵¹ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756.

gave Bedford two reasons for his refusal: first because peace and quiet in the coming session was essential to the country, and secondly because no system which included himself as a minister could possibly be maintained without contention.⁵² But one is tempted to believe—if Fox's motives be read correctly—that the wily intriguer told his friend only half the truth; in other words, that Fox was thinking of *the King*, who should have the repose he mentioned, and that endless difficulties would arise with his unreasonable rival if he (Fox) were not wholly out of place; that the King would therefore be naturally grateful for the concession, and when this projected Ministry (which he labelled a ‘foolish and arrogant scheme’⁵³) had completed the session, and when he himself had played his intended rôle for the Newcastles, and the late Ministry was entirely cleared, *then* the sedulous maker of ministries would claim his reward, and retire for ever from the scene.

At present Fox remained passive, and made no demur when Devonshire wheedled the King into giving the seals of the Exchequer to Legge. But His Majesty was as furious at Pitt as he had long since ceased to look upon Fox in any other light than that of a friend. He would even now have given the latter *carte blanche* and bidden him try his fortune alone;⁵⁴ but Fox told Bedford frankly

⁵² Fox to Bedford, November 4, 1756: *Bedford Corres.* II. 209.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756.

that he could not have been Minister without being Prime Minister, and under the circumstances he was not capable of undertaking the task. ‘Richelieu,’ he wrote, ‘were he alive, could not guide the councils of a nation if (which would be my case) he could not from November to April have above two hours in four-and-twenty to think of anything but the House of Commons. I should not be an honest man, if I attempted, at a nation’s risk, a task that no man alive is equal to. . . . If Pitt will have it that either he or I must be dishonest and mad, let it be him that is so, and for the sake of the public, let me assist to make his arrogance of as little detriment to the public as possible.’⁵⁵

Fox’s friends blamed Devonshire, without whom, they said, the enemies of the former could not have hoped to carry on the government; and they added that at all events the great debater’s assistance would be required before the end of the session. But Fox was outwardly content, even though he did say that there was nothing in the arrangement that he or his friends could like. Since his plan of a triple alliance had failed, he had the pleasure of noting the credit which he actually gained from the concession⁵⁶—a credit the more intensified in proportion as it contrasted with his rival’s uncompromising demeanour.

How much Pitt had learned of the events of these few days cannot definitely be said. He was

⁵⁵ Fox to Bedford, November 4, 1756.

⁵⁶ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756.

certainly informed of the meeting at the 'King's Head',⁵⁷ but his faithful agents gave apparently little positive information ; and it is improbable that the second meeting of the Junto (proposed for the 3rd) ever took place.⁵⁸ One of the humorous burlesques of the time made the great orator exclaim, 'I despise you all but a very few. I despise Fox in particular and all the rest in general.'⁵⁹

On the morning of the 7th, Devonshire, at the King's instance, repaired to Hayes, and called upon Pitt, who received the revised 'plan',⁶⁰ and, great as had been the concessions, the latter could not refrain from demurring at Holderness's retention of the northern department.⁶¹ Whether or not Devonshire felt despair in his thankless undertaking and resentment at the other's conduct, Pitt

⁵⁷ R. Lyttelton to Pitt, November 2, 1756 : *Chatham Corres.* II. 180.

⁵⁸ Fox makes no mention of it in his letter to Sackville on the following day ; and certainly Bedford was not present at any meeting, for Fox gave him by letter (Nov. 4) the details of the new arrangements. The meeting was perhaps held without Fox, but that is not very likely.

⁵⁹ 'Speech of William the Fourth to both Houses of Parliament.'—*Extracts relating to Admiral Byng*, Brit. Mus.

⁶⁰ Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 437.

⁶¹ Fox to Sackville, November 4, 1756. It is odd that a man of Pitt's broad conceptions should have preferred the department concerned with Hanover and Prussia to that which involved the direct handling of colonial affairs as well as the ultimate negotiations with France. It would seem as though his usual far-sightedness was a victim, on this occasion, to political malice.

afterwards told the Grenvilles that he had difficulty in persuading His Grace to enter upon his part in the arrangement.⁶²

When they talked over the list, the Duke seems to have brought up Fox's name again for Paymaster-General, but the latter's prophecy proved well founded when he said that peace could not be secured unless he were wholly excluded. Nevertheless Pitt's very objection was a compliment to the great master of logic whom he with so much reason feared. The ex-Paymaster contended that it would be a case analogous to that of Pelham in 1742 ;⁶³ and apparently the point was straightway dropped. There is no reason to suppose that Fox would in any case have altered his determination, but it is highly probable that Devonshire's conscience was sorely troubling him for having betrayed his friend, and was now at the last minute trying to make reparation. Pitt refused to declare his final decision until the 5th, when he should have seen Temple,⁶⁴ and since he had seriously meditated risking the whole success of the negotiation for the sake of his ambition for the northern department, it is to be presumed that he had not yet made up his mind.

Pitt's answer was not given till the morning of

⁶² Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 437.

⁶³ Pelham, when Paymaster General in 1742, had held a position in no way commensurate to his influence in the Ministry.

⁶⁴ Fox to Sackville, November 4, 1756.

the 6th,⁶⁵ so persistently could the arrogant statesman bully his courtiers. He now acquiesced in the proposed arrangements, though he repeated his distaste for Holderness, and as a proof that the little party was not in a relenting mood, some articles of impeachment were drawn up against Anson.⁶⁶ Grenville having set his heart on the Pay Office, the proposal (based obviously on a false supposition) seems to have emanated from somewhere, that Fox should be made Treasurer of the Navy, a suggestion which the latter termed an ‘insolent proposal’.⁶⁷ By the final arrangement Doddington and Darlington were dismissed ; Potter’s artful eulogies were rewarded by a share of the Pay Office ; and Grenville, though inflamed against his brothers and his brother-in-law,⁶⁸ was prevailed upon to accept his old position, the Treasurership of the Navy. Temple was of course to head the Admiralty, and Bedford was put down for Ireland, although his sentiments were not yet known. Unfortunately for Pitt (to quote Walpole) he ‘had not cousins enough to fill the whole Administration’.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Walpole to Mann, November 6, 1756 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 10.

⁶⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 104.

⁶⁷ Fox to Bedford, November 23, 1756 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 221. We can hardly wonder under the circumstances that Fox should have felt sensitive when the notion was intimated that any office if lucrative would be likely to satisfy him.

⁶⁸ Grenville’s Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 438..

⁶⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 99.

Fox had no intention of being regarded as a mere memory of the past. On the 10th he gave an elaborate dinner to some twenty-five persons at the Duke of Richmond's house in the Privy Garden. It was his intention to repair to Woburn on the 11th, after a visit there to remain in Holland House until Parliament opened, then to spend the winter in Privy Garden ; having no employment under the new régime, he determined to let Holland House, and be in town only while attending Parliament.⁷⁰ On the 13th he formally resigned the seals.⁷¹

Newcastle had tendered his resignation on the 11th—(in Fox's words) ‘without place or pension’,⁷² a fact which may deserve some commendation in view of the times in which he lived. But on the other hand the Duke had no intention of overlooking his family, whom he ‘might have no future opportunity of serving’. Intelligence that his relative, the Duke of Leeds, was to be turned out of the office of Cofferer, convinced him that there was no cruelty too great for his enemies to perpetrate ;⁷³ and it is interesting to note the evident regret in his assertion that he ‘could not rechoose Mr. Pitt’,⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756.

⁷¹ Walpole to Mann, November 13, 1756 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 12.

⁷² Fox to Sackville, October 28, 1756.

⁷³ Doddington or Ellis (friends of Fox), he told Hardwicke, might better be removed.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 2, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32868, f. 540.

⁷⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 9, 1756 : Add. MSS., 35416, f. 139.

the latter having decided to stand for Lyttelton's vacant⁷⁵ borough of Okehampton in the coming elections.⁷⁶ Curiously enough, now that his opposition to Newcastle was virtually at an end, Pitt gave up the seat which he had owed to the political benevolence of the man whom he most despised and had long harassed.

Meanwhile the Pittites, whether suspecting treachery or because they wanted to see how far they could go in the filling of minor offices, threatened at the last moment to dissolve the whole scheme. When Bute, Legge and Temple besieged Devonshire on the 11th, the latter did his best to stem their tide of complaints, and was so far successful that Bute finally took it upon himself to urge Charles Townshend to accept some other office than that of Cofferer⁷⁷—which would thus save Leeds. The great orator and his party had, in fact, too many plans in the background to be willing to push the Duke of Newcastle too hard. The latter, despite his misfortunes, appeared uncommonly serene, and Fox, who knew the old politician perhaps better than any one, advised his friend Devonshire to be scrupulously reserved while his predecessor continued daily to wait upon

⁷⁵ Lyttelton having been promised a peerage on his retirement.

⁷⁶ Re-election was, of course, necessary by reason of his new appointment.

⁷⁷ Temple to Pitt, November 11, 1756: *Chatham Corres.* I. 191. Townshend was given the office of Treasurer of the Chambers.

the King.⁷⁸ Also at the last moment, Fox besought Devonshire to tell the King that he (Fox) would not accept the position allotted him, unless he should receive a peerage for Lady Caroline and another for their eldest son.⁷⁹ The Lord Lieutenant could hardly refuse to make the request after the way he had treated his friend, but the King heard the proposal with great indignation.⁸⁰ It would seem that Fox's eagerness for non-political plums had triumphed for the moment over his better judgement.

On the 15th (to employ the Duke of Newcastle's term) the new Ministry was 'launched',⁸¹ and all kissed hands without a tremor, except perhaps Temple—to whom the King felt such intense dislike. Upon the Chancellor's resignation on the 19th, the great seal, after a useless dispute between Newcastle and Hardwicke,⁸² was put in commission; while Sir Robert Henley, by Fox's influence,⁸³ became Attorney-General in the place

⁷⁸ Fox to Devonshire, November 9, 1756 : Torrens, II. 332.

⁷⁹ Fox to Devonshire, November 11, 1756 : ibid. 333.

⁸⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 107. We are told that 'the public' confidently expected Lady Fox to receive a peerage.—Holdernes to Newcastle, November 22, 1757: Add. MSS., 32869, f. 120.

⁸¹ Newcastle to Arundel, November 13, 1756 : ibid., f. 32. 'Most of whom,' wrote Holdernes, 'were received in the least gracious manner possible.'—Holdernes to Newcastle, November 15, 1756 : ibid., f. 49.

⁸² Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 15, 1756.

⁸³ Walpole to Mann, July 3, 1757 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 67.

of Murray, now Lord Mansfield and Chief Justice of the Kingdom. Fox asked several favours for his friends and the request was granted.⁸⁴ ‘But what would Bedford do?’ was a question which must have passed from lip to lip.

The little statesman of Woburn was more ardent in his friendship for Fox than any of the Holland House junto. He had willingly consented to follow him into Opposition—if such a move should seem advisable—and he was angry that Devonshire had ruined the project of a Cumberland ministry.⁸⁵ It was currently rumoured during the second week of November that Rigby would oppose the Ministry in the Commons, and Bedford in the Lords;⁸⁶ and whatever pains the Duke may have taken to correct this, and although he so far relented as to permit Gower to retain the privy seal, nevertheless the King was informed that His Grace ‘could not think it proper to enter his service’.⁸⁷ And thus matters stood for several days.

On his return from Woburn, Fox told Devonshire that Bedford was still irresolute; and some correspondence which took place between the First Lord and his intended successor in Ireland⁸⁸ had

⁸⁴ Notably an English peerage for his friend, Hillsborough.—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 107.

⁸⁵ Ibid. II. 103.

⁸⁶ Digby to Williams, November 10, 1756.

⁸⁷ Gower to Bedford, November 9, 1756: *Bedford Corres.* II. 210.

⁸⁸ Devonshire to Bedford, November 18, 1756; Bedford to Devonshire, November 19, 1756: *ibid.* II. 215, 217.

little effect in persuading the recalcitrant Duke. The motive for Bedford's obstinacy was evidently his loyalty to Fox. Whatever his pride may have suffered, he had followed his friend upon the tempest-tossed bark of the Newcastle Ministry, and was loth now to see his companion excluded from power, while he himself, who had filled no office, should receive so high an honour. At least they should give Fox compensation, or the Duke would not stir a step to help them. On the 22nd he wrote to his friend that his sentiments were the same as when Fox had last seen him ; he feared that it was impossible for him to accept, unless a considerable employment should be found for him (Fox) or a peerage for Lady Caroline—‘ such marks of his (the King’s) favour as shall take off the unjust proscription that has been laid upon you by the new ministers ’.⁸⁹ Perchance there was just a little jealousy in this, as the First Lord had thought a trifle more of his country than of Fox.

But Fox had a little game of his own to play and he had no desire to see this temporary administration hampered in important matters. He intimated in his reply to Woburn that His Majesty had appealed to him so strongly that he would not for anything have Bedford deny himself on his account. ‘ The proscription of me, My Lord,’ he continued, ‘ proceeds from Leicester House, and yet I am of Your Grace’s opinion that sooner or later they are

⁸⁹ Bedford to Fox, November 22, 1756 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 219.

likely to agree with me . . . and I do assure Your Grace that I shall not fly off so as to lose sight of, much less prevent, such an agreement. . . . I own I see danger in their joining the Duke of Newcastle, but I think Your Grace's taking Ireland and my showing strength in the House of Commons (for personal complaisance does harm and spoils them) may effectually prevent it.⁹⁰ It was no doubt perfectly clear to Fox that the more friends he possessed in the Ministry, the more certain he could be of obtaining his coveted treasure, when dissolution came. In the end he persuaded Bedford to accept, and the Devonshire Administration was now complete.

The activity of Fox which had appeared during these days of negotiation, seemed the result of long pent-up energy that had suffered stupefaction under an arbitrary over-lord. It incensed him mightily that the Administration was setting up Dr. Hay, a member of the new Admiralty, for election for a borough which Fox himself controlled by a ten years' lease. That a nominee of his own should be set aside for a friend of Legge's was not to be borne, and 'the superlative insolence of imagining that he should be afraid (to prevent this)' stung him into writing the First Lord that the election of his own candidate was certain. He would support the Administration under Devonshire's leadership to the utmost of his ability, 'but

⁹⁰ Fox to Bedford: *Bedford Corres.*, November 23, 1756, II. 221.

if Mr. Pitt and G. Grenville,' he declared, 'think I cannot do without some submission to them, I shall show them that I can.'⁹¹ Bedford warned his friend that he was making a mistake, as he feared that the Ministry, if exasperated, would misrepresent him to the King ;⁹² but Fox answered that the King both knew and approved of his conduct extremely. They never had the decency, he declared, to ask him for the interest, and he was expected to give up the borough merely to please them.⁹³

Fox's tactless and overbearing successor now made matters worse by intruding himself into a battle already fierce enough, and demanded the borough for Charles Townshend. Fox was now angrier than ever. After a long tirade against Pitt, he assured Devonshire that if the King himself should ask for the borough, he would refuse it.⁹⁴ The Ministry were said to be greatly provoked by such an attitude of defiance,⁹⁵ but Fox had his way and both Pitt and Legge were frustrated.⁹⁶

Holderness had been so long a tool to his late chief that he could neither relinquish the habit of sending him despatches from abroad nor resist the temptation of communicating any odd bit of gossip

⁹¹ Fox to Devonshire, November 23, 1756 : Torrens, II. 327.

⁹² Bedford to Fox, November 22, 1756.

⁹³ Fox to Bedford, November 23, 1756.

⁹⁴ Fox to Devonshire, November 25, 1756 : Torrens, II. 338.

⁹⁵ Holderness to Newcastle, November 22, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32869, f. 120. ⁹⁶ Torrens, II. 238.

that he could pick up amid the troubles of the Ministry. Even before the new régime had fairly commenced, the Secretary told Newcastle that the latter's appointed successor was 'in great difficulty to steer between his two friends, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox'.⁹⁷ The assertion was unmistakably true. The Duke was the highest placed and probably the least pleased of all the new officials, and he was not one of the vultures who had eagerly swooped down upon the ruins of the Newcastles. It was his misfortune perhaps that esteem for his integrity had pointed him out for a thankless task that no ambition would have prompted him to undertake. His Cabinet, save the Leicester House trio, was practically composed of Fox's friends or Newcastle's adherents, while he himself could no longer pose as either; and if this fact were not a sufficiently manifest weakness, he was constantly forced to trim between his factious friend at Holland House and the overweening Secretary for the South. When the post of Surveyor of the Works became suddenly vacant, Fox demanded it for his friend Hamilton; while Pitt on the other hand had designed to place his brother in the office. The new Secretary won the dispute, but Fox sought consolation in venting his wrath upon the First Lord, whom he accused of endangering their friendship.⁹⁸ In fact there is little doubt that

⁹⁷ Newcastle to Arundel, November 13, 1756: Add. MSS., 32869, f. 32.

⁹⁸ Fox to Devonshire, December 3, 1756: Torrens, II. 340.

Devonshire was in a perpetual quandary, and Hardwicke was probably right in his conclusion that the First Lord had to submit to many dismissals and appointments of which he did not approve.⁹⁹

Meanwhile the Devonshire Ministry was harassed by a new difficulty. A violent paper, called the *Test*, was issued every Saturday night and spared neither Pitt on the one hand nor Newcastle on the other. The authorship was commonly attributed to Fox or someone in his employ, but a letter which he wrote to Hanbury Williams clearly denies this,¹⁰⁰ and as the Ambassador was on terms of close intimacy with Holland House, and residing in a foreign land, there is hardly reason to believe that Fox would have prevaricated. It would seem, moreover, that Fox, were he involved in the matter, would have been scrupulously careful to avoid personalities toward the friend who might

Devonshire replied in a tone of mild reproach. After explaining that he had promised Hamilton what he thought to be an equivalent, he closed his letter with the words, 'I must conclude with assuring you that there is not a man breathing who loves you better, that is more your friend, or wishes to continue so, than' &c.—Devonshire to Fox, December 4, 1756: *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, November 17, 1756: Add. MSS., 32869, f. 78.

¹⁰⁰ 'I really don't know who writes them, but he has wit, and I am told by one who I believe guesses, that he is a young man of no note, unused to write, that has taken a fancy to me, and is angry with Pitt for refusing in any shape to join me.'—Fox to Williams, December 26, 1756: Stowe MSS., 263.

some time prove essential to the fulfilment of his wish. The *Test*, on the contrary, knew no discrimination (saving its partiality for Fox); and in one number it sneeringly defined ‘purity of Whiggism’ as ‘Whiggery stamped with the coin of Ca——sh.’¹⁰¹

The stress of these attacks brought support to the Administration in the shape of a paper known as the *Con-Test*, which showed less ability than its rival, but surpassed it in acrimony;¹⁰² and a pamphlet war ensued as a result.¹⁰³ Both the combatants paused at times to attack Newcastle, and the Duke, thinking always of his own hardships, believed that the two journals would bury their special quarrel for the purpose of attacking the late Ministry.¹⁰⁴

December proved nearly as eventful a month as its predecessor. On the 2nd Parliament at last opened and members were keenly alert to ascertain what truth there was in a certain current rumour. Pitt’s personal supporters were so few and his position in consequence so weak that he had formed a strong alliance with the Tories, who were more than pleased with their new-found importance. Pitt loudly protested that he had promised them

¹⁰¹ The *Test*, no. 24.

¹⁰² Walpole to Mann, January 6, 1756: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 25.

¹⁰³ Walpole writes that Pitt’s wayward sister, Elizabeth Villiers Pitt, sent a bundle of letters to the *Test* to be used against her brother.—*Ibid.* IV. 30.

—¹⁰⁴ Newcastle to Robinson, December 27, 1756: Add. MSS., 32869, f. 402.

nothing, but the very thought of an increasing prominence on the part of their old rivals, roused consternation in the ranks of the older Whigs ;¹⁰⁵ and on the 6th the phlegmatic Hardwicke deigned to make a pilgrimage to the offending Minister. The interview began with flattery on both sides ; then Hardwicke shrewdly pointed out that persecution had given Pitt and the Newcastles a common ground, and his host declared that he was sure the *Test* was written by some creature of Fox. Pitt went on to say, later in the conversation, that he would continue in office if he could maintain himself, but he was not sure that he would not be pleased at going out ; while with Fox he would never have anything to do. This was in answer to the Earl's observation, 'We dislike insidiousness more than open hostility.' Hardwicke then warned him artfully against 'inquiries and censures',¹⁰⁶ which were the only circumstances that might drive the Newcastles to Fox ; and His Lordship was pleased to observe that the great man not only disdained 'censures' but treated the coming inquiry, as a 'slight thing'. It was not

¹⁰⁵ Lyttelton to Lyttelton, January 23, 1757 : Phillimore, II. 583.

¹⁰⁶ To sound Pitt as to his intentions regarding the coming inquiry was no doubt one of the motives of Hardwicke's visit. Later, in the course of conversation, he expressed his and Newcastle's disapproval of the notion of raising Highlanders for service in America. Pitt did not claim the idea as his own, but gave the cold-blooded rejoinder that 'not many of them would return'.

till near the end of the colloquy that Hardwicke ventured to sound his host in respect to the Tories ; the Earl then warned him of the embarrassments and difficulties that would result from such a union. But Pitt, while he made no denial of these plausible fears, was disposed to give the Tories the heartiest praise, said (in answer to a question of his visitor) that the bond was disinterested and unconditional, and stated by way of explanation, that he was forced to ‘look about him a little’. His Lordship then took his leave and sent Newcastle an account of the interview, which he trusted for delivery to no one but his own nephew, the Duke’s secretary.¹⁰⁷

No doubt Walpole was right when he declared that the little party’s support was so hearty as to be embarrassing.¹⁰⁸ Yet Pitt might have been gratified had he known that Newcastle could thus satisfy his love of tribulation : ‘What will the Whig Duke of Devonshire say to it, or Mr. Legge, who, Mr. Pitt told me, was the “child of the Whigs” ? But above all, what will this good Whig House of Commons say to it ? I hope it will not end in a dissolution of this Parliament. That is a serious consideration indeed.’¹⁰⁹

Serious indeed it would be if the Newcastle majority were annihilated before the dread in-

¹⁰⁷ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 6, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32869, f. 253.

¹⁰⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 109.

¹⁰⁹ Newcastle to Holderness, December 10, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32869, f. 316. Pitt had called Legge the ‘child of the Whigs’ in 1755. See chap. v, note 95.

quiries came on, but it would take more than Pitt's Tories to accomplish that. Meanwhile the Duke was pondering what advantage might accrue from the breach between Fox and Pitt (which may perhaps have been one of the motives of Hardwicke's memorable visit) but agreed with his friend that nothing further could be said to Pitt at present, and believed civilities and flattery to His Lordship would be all that they could expect. 'He depends for his support,' concluded the Duke, 'upon the Tories (*quo semel est imbuta*) and the mob; and when he can't have that, he will go out.... But I have done wondering at anything.'¹¹⁰ It would have been nearer the truth if Newcastle had said that he wondered at everything.

Meanwhile disgrace had fallen upon the new Administration the very first day in Parliament. When the address was moved in the Lords in answer to the royal speech announcing the intended withdrawal of the electoral troops, a clause was found, which Fox's artfulness, it is said,¹¹¹ had inserted, thanking His Majesty for their services. Temple, who had been prevented by illness from attending the Cabinet meeting which had framed the Address, now delivered a most violent invective against an action which he declared would be

¹¹⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 11, 1756: Add. MSS., 32869, f. 320.

¹¹¹ Walpole to Mann, December 8, 1756: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 19. The story certainly sounds plausible. Fox may well have prevailed upon the unsuspecting Devonshire to have the clause in question inserted.

erroneously interpreted as an endorsement of a vicious policy ; after saying which, he stalked out of the House in great anger. But the Lords had long known the chief of the Admiralty and they hardly needed Bedford's logic¹¹² to read the situation. Pitt told Hardwicke afterwards that he had had nothing to do with this disturbance,¹¹³ but despite this avowal, he had refused to consider an inclusion of the clause in the address of the Commons, and threatened to resign if the King insisted upon the point.¹¹⁴ Such a calamity in the present state of politics was of course not to be thought of ; and so a catastrophe in the Government was averted. But such shocks as these in a Ministry that was called upon to prove its right to succeed its predecessor, would not be easily retrieved. George II was not likely to discriminate between men he hated, and there is little doubt that all chance of inspiring confidence was now lost to the Devonshire Ministry.

On the fourth day of the session Fox, reputedly displeased by Devonshire's appointments,¹¹⁵ retired

¹¹² Bedford pointed out that thanks were due to the King because Parliament itself had addressed him for the electoral troops.—Lyttelton to Lyttelton, December 19, 1756 : Phillimore, II. 339. Pitt was bound to discountenance the measure for fear of its effect upon the outside world—or, in other words (to quote Newcastle's expression), ‘the mob’.

¹¹³ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 6, 1756.

¹¹⁴ *Memoirs of a Celebrated Character*, p. 76.

¹¹⁵ Walpole to Mann, December 8, 1756 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 19.

into the country, having given out that he intended to remain six weeks. Barrington sent the news to Newcastle¹¹⁶—who thought it incredible; if really true, Fox must be resolved to shirk the inquiry, with the notion that he had nothing to do with it.¹¹⁷ But the Duke at last brought himself to believe the report, decided that a Cumberland plot was being hatched, and that the great debater would come back either to support or oppose the Administration, whichever he should see fit at the time.¹¹⁸ Whatever Fox's motives were, he kept them to himself, and in less than a fortnight he was back again.

Some said the ex-Secretary's situation was not as comfortable as it had been;¹¹⁹ and there were outcries against him for having abandoned all hope of again becoming a Minister.¹²⁰ Probably his enemies felt that this vacation from official burdens, this respite which Fox was so evidently enjoying, was not fully justified or merited; while his friends, we know, believed that his best interests lay on the scene of action, and consequently had per-

¹¹⁶ Barrington to Newcastle, December 7, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32869, f. 266.

¹¹⁷ Newcastle to Holderness, December 10, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 316.

¹¹⁸ Newcastle concluded that Devonshire and Bedford would eventually have to persuade Pitt to give Fox a lucrative office—perhaps a peerage as well—as the only means of silencing him.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 11, 1756 : *ibid.* 320.

¹¹⁹ Digby to Digby, December 7, 1755 : *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

¹²⁰ Fox to Digby, December 14, 1755 : *ibid.*

suaded him to return, much as he protested its uselessness.¹²¹ On the other hand, it is hardly to be doubted that he was deeply interested in the late uproar in the Ministry (which, if report were true, he had indirectly caused), and having before him the ugly task of defending the Newcastles, he could not but rejoice when he scented trouble where Pitt was concerned. It is said, moreover, that Devonshire confided to his friend all the plans of the Junior Secretary¹²²—a fact which, if true, gave Fox ample opportunities for annoying the Ministry. The intended withdrawal of the mercenaries aroused in him a mood of cynical pity, and he ‘thought it proper to admonish the Ministry not to send away the foreign troops without they were sure they could defend this country and yet spare a force to America’.¹²³ To vex and harass, to enjoy now and then a bit of revenge, and yet to avoid an act or demonstration that would seriously render him odious—such was the light in which he seemed to regard his duty with reference to the Ministry. His parliamentary programme, as stated by himself, was as follows: ‘I will now support all public measures and use my best endeavours to procure a quiet session. I will strenuously defend the late Ministry even

¹²¹ Digby to Digby, December 14, 1756: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

¹²² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 116.

¹²³ Fox to Digby, December 14, 1756: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII. Dupplin wrote to Newcastle (December 13) that ‘Fox spoke extremely well’.—Add. MSS., 32869, f. 355.

when I have not been concerned with them. And whatever my enemies may say, they shall own I am an honest man.'¹²⁴ How ably he put this policy into execution has been already shown.

Between *Test* and Tory, dread of the inquiry, and terror lest the new Ministry should gain in influence, Newcastle spent the months that followed his resignation in bitterest anxiety. Conscious of the false position which Fox had held before the outer world, the Duke was constantly suspicious that the ex-Secretary would leave that guilty Cabinet to founder in the Commons for want of proper piloting. Selfish motives there must be in every act of politicians of his and Fox's school ; how, then, could it avail the ex-Secretary to cover up the traces of administrative neglect in which he had no share ? Was not his resignation, after all, designed to throw all blame upon his colleagues? Such was the Duke's avowed suspicion ; and the attacks in the *Test* only served to strengthen it.¹²⁵ Some days later His Grace became so exasperated that he engaged his private secretary to make a rigid investigation of this mystery in journaldom. The result was not altogether satisfactory, although friends of Fox were found to be concerned in the publication.¹²⁶ Meanwhile the latter had taken

¹²⁴ Fox to Collinson, November 24, 1756 : Liechtenstein, *Holland House*, I. 49.

¹²⁵ Newcastle to Robinson, December 27, 1756.

¹²⁶ 'An Account of the *Test*' (in the handwriting of Jones, Newcastle's secretary).—Add. MSS., 35416, f. 158. Some ascribed the paper to Ilchester, which Fox regarded as a

advantage of the adjournment for the holidays to announce again that he was going for a sojourn in the country,¹²⁷ and the Duke's anxiety was not dispelled till he was assured that Fox was expected to be back in time for the reopening of the session.¹²⁸

No one had fewer cares than Fox at this time. In his intimate friendship with Bedford,¹²⁹ he felt quite well assured that Kildare and his party were safe in any emergency. As for the Ministry, he could see its incurable weakness, and gaze with unfeeling *hauteur* while the First Lord cowered under his responsibility or diligently tried to get Pitt a welcome in the Closet.¹³⁰ ‘I,’ wrote Fox, ‘who have not thought so before, do now think this strange Administration will not hold. What it will break into, I don’t know, but I believe into anything before Pitt would join with me.’¹³¹ Still he was far from feeling malice. The worst that he had

capital joke (Fox to Digby, December 18, 1756), and others imputed it to Doddington or to an actor named Murphy.—Walpole to Mann, January 6, 1756 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 25 ; Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 109.

¹²⁷ Fox said that it was for a fortnight (Fox to Collinson, December 23, 1756 : Add. MSS., 28727, f. 32), but Newcastle again heard that it was for six weeks.—Newcastle to Robinson, December 27, 1756.

¹²⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, January 7, 1757 : Add. MSS. 32870, f. 58.

¹²⁹ In December he had written ‘The Duke of Bedford and I am (*sic.*) more closely united than ever.’—Fox to Williams, December 26, 1756 : Stowe MSS., 263.

¹³⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 4, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 21.

¹³¹ Fox to Digby, December 14, 1756.

to say of his rival was in his sneer at the ‘confidence which he has in his superiority over all mankind’.¹³²

Gout and initial inexperience were keeping Pitt in close preoccupation. Now and then he would create astonishment by some bold exploit on paper, or inflame his colleagues by the tone he employed in Council. ‘Pitt used to call me a madman,’ exclaimed Granville on one occasion, ‘but I never was half so mad as he is.’¹³³ Newcastle would fain have courted him still, but ‘saw no opening’, he declared to Hardwicke, and the commendations in the King’s speech of certain inflammatory addresses, the Duke regarded as distinct pieces of impudence towards His Majesty and a reflection upon his former Minister.¹³⁴

The Junior Secretary was no doubt as uncomfortable in the Foreign Office as Devonshire was at the Treasury, and Chesterfield wrote in January : ‘Mr. Pitt seems to me to have almost as many enemies to encounter as His Prussian Majesty.’¹³⁵ Once in the course of the debates of the session the Secretary had said that he ‘had neither ministerial power nor influence’ ; and though this was one of Pitt’s hyperboles, we have good reason

¹³² Fox to Williams, December 26, 1756.

¹³³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 116.

¹³⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 9, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 21. Granville, who never tired of laughing at the Duke of Newcastle, declared that ‘Pitt might have the Duke of Newcastle whenever he pleased’.— Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 4, 1757.

¹³⁵ Chesterfield to Stanhope, January 12, 1757 : *Corres. of Chesterfield*, III. 1143.

to suppose that he had little power outside of the Foreign Office. The Devonshire Administration had from its commencement an arduous position to fill, but the Ministry neither had in itself the qualities of unity or strength, nor could it disclose any talent for battling with problems or prejudices. It suffered at the beginning of their rule from a courtesy to the King and an unpopular alliance ; Pitt practically commenced his leadership in the Commons with a breach of privilege and a subsidy to Hanover ; and throughout his short tenure of office the Secretary was confronted with his inconsistencies with the past, and his weakness as a practical politician. The subsidy may have been a stroke of policy to conciliate the King ; if so, it failed completely. His heavy expenditures for the benefit of British arms were yet to receive their vindication, and Newcastle looked with awe and apprehension upon his seeming extravagance.¹³⁶ His term of office was even too short to show the great capacity of a master-mind,¹³⁷ and it was not until later that he reaped the fruits of this brief but useful experience.

¹³⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 11, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32869, f. 320.

¹³⁷ As he contemplated his gloomy situation, one may wonder if Pitt did not at this time consider the feasibility of reviving Fox's Gibraltar scheme (see vol. i, pp. 433-4). Shortly after his return to office Pitt made this offer to Spain—fortunately without success—on the occasion of a crisis to which his own rashness had contributed. In spite of—or perhaps because of—the Cabinet's resistance, he insisted upon sending an expedition to Rochfort at a time when the position of

Moreover, in the political features of the Administration Pitt's lack of an efficient party was far from being counterbalanced by the cordial feelings of Leicester House, and while the disfavour of the Closet both precluded hearty co-operation and cast a damper upon his measures, the notorious case of Byng, with its attendant failure in the Commons, was alone sufficient to shake the Administration to its foundations.

All aspects considered, the Pitt-Devonshire Ministry was very nearly a failure. It did nothing to impeach the character of its predecessor and little to prove its own right to continue longer than it did. Its two achievements worthy of mention were the passage of the Militia Bill and the raising of the Highland regiments.¹³⁸ In other respects the insatiable ambition of the 'man-mountain',¹³⁹ as hostile pamphlets called Pitt, attained but little distinction.

The King was already tired of his Ministers and naturally leaned toward the man who had tried

Cumberland, on the right flank of Frederick of Prussia, was critical in the extreme. It was more by good luck than good management that England and Prussia escaped a crushing blow after Richelieu's victory at Hastenbeck.

¹³⁸ This was, of course, not an innovation, except in so far as troops were now raised from the legitimist clans. Highlanders had been employed in military service in 1725, and some independent companies had served before that. But Pitt was statesman enough to rise above such prejudices as existed in the minds of Newcastle and Hardwicke.

¹³⁹ See *The Enquiry is not begun—when will it? : Extracts relating to Admiral Byng*: Brit. Mus., cat. no. 5805 g. 1.

so faithfully to make a Cabinet for him. He was ready to believe the *Test* was Fox's work,¹⁴⁰ he allowed Newcastle to indulge in confidential audiences, and he gave Devonshire increasing favour, but the great master of argument and political energy had still the first place in his sovereign's affections. Newcastle believed the King might do the best he could with his Ministers, but, failing that, would 'then fling all into Mr. Fox'.¹⁴¹ A few days later his fears were confirmed when the King impressed upon him that if he thought of coming in, he must unite with Fox; and His Majesty constantly threw out expressions of his partiality for the latter. The Duke declared to Hardwicke that he 'would not be cudgelled into an alliance with anybody, and particularly not with Mr. Fox'.¹⁴² But this was Newcastle rashness; two months later he enlisted Mansfield to tell Fox that it would be madness for them to unite until the inquiries were over, but he had no 'backwardness to act with him' nor 'any apprehension' that they 'should not agree'.¹⁴³

The King, for his part, was determined to get rid of Pitt and Temple, and impatient of delay. Waldegrave told him that Newcastle was certainly desirous of returning to office, but was still undecided as to the part he should take, 'being

¹⁴⁰ Newcastle to Robinson, December 27, 1756.

¹⁴¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 4, 1757.

¹⁴² Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 9, 1757.

¹⁴³ Newcastle to Mansfield, March 5, 1757.

equally balanced between fear on one side and love of power on the other'.¹⁴⁴ The King had every reason to believe this, but he sent Waldegrave to offer the Duke any terms he might choose to dictate—a fact truly indicative of the King's desire to free himself of Pitt at any cost. The result was by no means discouraging. Newcastle showed an evident jealousy of Fox's influence in the Closet,¹⁴⁵ but his message to the Sovereign gave the latter reason to believe he would accede, although he stated positively that he must wait until the supplies were raised and the inquiry finished.¹⁴⁶

Fox's absence had been no longer than the parliamentary recess allowed, but during the early part of February he had been confined to his room by illness, and both he and Lady Caroline were prostrated by grief for their youngest son, who was thought to be dying.¹⁴⁷ On the 7th in spite of his indisposition he dragged himself to the Commons to defend the late Ministry from attack, and 'spoke', wrote Rigby, 'better than almost I ever heard him.'¹⁴⁸ Whether or not health and spirits returned as the month wore on, Fox showed

¹⁴⁴ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 95–6.

¹⁴⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 9, 1757.

¹⁴⁶ Newcastle to the King, March 9, 1757: Add. MSS., 32870, f. 250. This was just after the Duke's overture to Fox, which we have noted above.

¹⁴⁷ Rigby to Bedford, February 3, 1757: *Bedford Corres.* II. 230.

¹⁴⁸ Rigby to Bedford, February 7, 1757: *Bedford Corres.* II. 234. See chap. vii, note 163.

even more than his customary energy in dealing with the Court-Martial Bill, and there was no further talk of projected absences from town; so Newcastle appeared less disturbed about the inquiries. The Duke's faithful satellites kept him carefully informed of all that Fox said in politics as well as a great deal that he did not say; and Mansfield and Stone formed as usual the advisory Cabinet for Newcastle's political well-being.¹⁴⁹ Fox's friends had said with unfeeling candour that whereas Newcastle's integrity made him a proper person for First Minister, he was prone to delay too much, and should have left matters of business to younger men—should have been, in fact, like Devonshire, though they did not say so. ‘This is a fine scheme,’ was the Duke's indignant comment, ‘and a friendly one indeed, as if you could continue long in real power, and have all the offices of business in other hands and perhaps in the hands of your enemies.’¹⁵⁰ Distracted by current rumours, and yet eager to recover his old supremacy, Newcastle hesitated to take any definite action, and complained to Hardwicke that he saw himself ‘exposed to the indignation of the King, the contempt of Mr. Fox, and the resentment of Mr. Pitt’.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Evidence in Newcastle's correspondence is confirmed by the statement of Shelburne.—Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, I. 35.

¹⁵⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 9, 1757.

¹⁵¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, March 12, 1757: Add. MSS., 32870, f. 70. The callous Lord President had recently hurt and offended the Duke by declaring that he was ‘the first

Thoroughly disgusted with Newcastle's wavering, the King became the more determined that Devonshire should be released from his uncomfortable position, and himself freed from the men he detested. At the beginning of March he summoned Fox and authorized him to compose a Ministry, in the formation of which he was to consult the Duke of Cumberland, who was soon to leave for an important command upon the Continent. His Royal Highness was now in particularly high favour with his father, and Fox employed his friend to undermine the Ministers and obstruct them in every way possible.¹⁵²

On the 9th Fox saw Doddington and they put down Devonshire to remain at the Treasury, Sackville for the Seals and Halifax for the Admiralty; while Newcastle should succeed to the first place, if after the inquiries he might be induced to accept it.¹⁵³ Fox himself, having in no wise abandoned his intention to keep out of official prominence, could talk of Newcastle's return with stolid indifference. His immediate task was to oblige the King, while for himself he claimed only the Pay Office and an Irish reversion.¹⁵⁴

For some weeks the new project languished for lack of encouragement from the parties indicated.

Minister that ever quitted with a majority in Parliament of 150'.

¹⁵² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 195-6.

¹⁵³ Doddington, *Diary*, March 9, 1757.

¹⁵⁴ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 103.

Mansfield entered heartily into the scheme and tried to get Newcastle to commit himself, but, as he told Fox, the Duke was ‘governed by Lord Hardwicke even to a letter’, and Hardwicke was a man (as we have frequently observed) who habitually hated decision. Fox thought he could rely on Devonshire, Granville and Bedford, and he even offered the Treasury to the latter; since, however, Rigby expected to be secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, and such a post meant visions of lucre without limit, the artful major-domo of Woburn was not disposed to encourage his master to accept.¹⁵⁵

At length, although the more prominent figures were necessarily eliminated, Fox was nevertheless sufficiently hopeful to feel justified in preparing a scheme for the King, which Earl Waldegrave consented to present him. The list included in its number: Egmont, Sackville, Halifax, Doddington and Charles Townshend—not, one would say, an exceedingly strong foundation on which to build a ministry. The King, after expressing disapproval of some minor points, signified his desire that Fox should negotiate with the persons specified.¹⁵⁶

At this juncture Pitt, apprehending that Fox was about to take measures against him, bade Sackville tell the Duke of Newcastle that he was ‘not so averse to him as His Grace had been told’.¹⁵⁷ This

¹⁵⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 197.

¹⁵⁶ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 104–5.

was an interesting bit of condescension and showed that the great Minister was forced to realize his own weakness. Moreover the apprehension was well justified. For some time Fox had considered the excellent opportunity of wreaking vengeance upon his rival on the occasion of Cumberland's departure ; and it was this thought of procuring Pitt's dismissal which had led him to such extreme celerity in getting together an administration before His Royal Highness (instigated, of course, by Fox¹⁵⁸) should definitely declare his refusal to leave England while Pitt remained at the Foreign Office. But it is scarcely likely that Fox was yet ready for the blow to be struck. While Cumberland, ignorant of the ways of politicians, and characteristically impatient, was pressing for instant dismissal of Pitt and Temple, his friend was struggling desperately with the more difficult features of the plot—and apparently without success.¹⁵⁹ Halifax, summoned to town to accept the Admiralty, declared the scheme ‘the wildest imaginable’, although he did not say that he would refuse. To Newcastle, to whom he confided what he knew of the affair (which was not much),

¹⁵⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 198.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* II. 196.

¹⁵⁹ An attempt was apparently made about this time to frustrate the ministry-makers by circulating false stories in connexion with the Duke's departure. Fox promptly called upon Pitt and Legge for denials, and the Commons were then reassured.—Doddington, *Diary*, March 13, 1757 ; Rigby to Bedford, March 21, 1757 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 240.

he said that Fox had declared that if the present Ministry remained two months longer, Leicester House would be supreme.¹⁶⁰ Sackville, who had deviated from his allegiance to Fox, refused now to be tempted by the offer of the Seals, considering that his best interests lay at Leicester House ; while Egmont still remembered the peerage he had long desired ; and finally Charles Townshend, though discontented with an employment that was little better than a sinecure, likewise hesitated to embark on a ship that apparently could not be manned.¹⁶¹ Halifax excepted, only Doddington seemed willing to co-operate, and he, as Walpole remarks, had ‘gone in and out too often to lose any reputation by one more promotion or disgrace’.¹⁶² As if such a situation were not gloomy enough, the crafty Halifax, hearing a few days later that Robinson had been prevailed upon to accept the Seals, not only prevented this plan from maturing but retracted his own acceptance of the Admiralty.¹⁶³ Perhaps to soothe his friend’s discouragement, Cumberland persuaded the King to grant him a reversion for himself and two of his children (to take place at Doddington’s decease). The peerage for Lady Caroline, which Fox had also wished for but left to Cumberland’s

¹⁶⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, March 13, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 267.

¹⁶¹ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 105.

¹⁶² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 200.

¹⁶³ Doddington, *Diary*, March 23, 1757.

discretion, was in the present humour of the Crown, impossible.¹⁶⁴

Thus matters stood about the 1st of April, the day of the Duke's departure.¹⁶⁵ Yet there was no inclination to save the present Administration. Temple was dismissed on the 5th, and, the Duke having said that he would not serve under Pitt a fortnight, the latter was turned out the next night; while Legge and Grenville followed with their resignations.¹⁶⁶ The destructive part of Fox's policy had been a success; it was now for this destroyer of ministries to see what he could do with the constructive.

The partial wreck of the Devonshire Ministry left the nation practically without an administration. Fox was still far from achieving success, and the indignation which arose in certain quarters at the removal of the popular Minister boded little good for the impressment of recruits for the new Ministry. The City, it was said, declaimed loudly 'against Mr. Fox and his military Administration'.¹⁶⁷

The first sign of anything tangible in the way of

¹⁶⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 201.

¹⁶⁵ Erskine wrote to Grenville on that day that the conspirators 'had not the representation of a ministry'.—*Grenville Papers*, I. 189.

¹⁶⁶ It was practically the same 'purging' which had taken place in November, 1755. Charles Townshend, never very resolute in politics, waited three weeks before resigning.—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 202.

¹⁶⁷ Abercromby to Halifax, April 7, 1757: Add. MSS., 32870, f. 372.

a ministry was a notification to Fox and Doddington to kiss hands for Paymaster and Treasurer of the Navy respectively ; for this, however, they requested postponement until after the inquiries.¹⁶⁸ Almost simultaneously the Admiralty, which had been spurned by Halifax, was offered to the Earl of Winchelsea, who accepted his old post with alacrity, protesting, when wished joy of his appointment, that he 'had no joy, but if the King had ordered him to put himself at the head of a company of grenadiers, he should have done it'.¹⁶⁹ The Earl of Egremont, a friend of Granville, was said to be the latest candidate designed for the Seals,¹⁷⁰ while Sir George Lee, dissatisfied with his growing insignificance, expressed his willingness to accept the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.¹⁷¹ For a moment it looked as if Fox was really going to succeed in the construction of his ministry.

But the truth seems to have been far otherwise. The prospective Paymaster was too cognizant of the weight of Newcastle patronage to think that a ministry would be durable without the Duke's

¹⁶⁸ Doddington, *Diary*, April 6, 1757.

¹⁶⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, April 8, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 372. Hardwicke said Winchelsea had fallen in his esteem for accepting office at such a time.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, April 9, 1757. Clearly the Newcastles were anxious that the projected ministry should collapse.

¹⁷⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, April 8, 1757. Egremont was a son of the late Sir William Wyndham, the Tory leader.

¹⁷¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 200. This may have been after Fox's attempts to secure Dupplin. The exact sequence of these political oscillations is difficult to ascertain.

accession to the chief place, and at present it was not even a question of durability but of possibility. Meanwhile Devonshire said he would remain, in any event, till the end of the session,¹⁷² and get along as best he could without a chancellor of the exchequer ; although Fox was pressing Dupplin to accept the office, thinking probably that such an appointment, if successful, would have an important influence on Newcastle, who was deterred perhaps by the disfavour he suffered in the Closet ; but the prospect was not encouraging, and Fox thought he might be driven to take the office himself.¹⁷³

At last it became known that even Egremont—although his services had never been formally asked—had decided to turn a deaf ear to negotiation,¹⁷⁴ and, when there was talk of offering the Treasury to Lord Denbigh,¹⁷⁵ a man almost unknown in political circles, it was easy for even the most sanguine of Fox's friends to perceive that the so-called 'Ducal Government'¹⁷⁶ was quite impossible to construct. The only hope would have been an alliance with Newcastle, and, far from consenting to this himself, the Duke was even suspected of having prevented his friends from

¹⁷² Temple to Grenville, April 8, 1757 : *Chatham Corres.* I. 193.

¹⁷³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, April 8, 1757.

¹⁷⁴ Walpole to Mann, April 20, 1757 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 45.

¹⁷⁵ Roberts to Newcastle, April 15, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 419.

¹⁷⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, April 8, 1757.

lending their assistance.¹⁷⁷ Mansfield actually hinted to the King that Newcastle would go into opposition, and in such an event he believed the Whigs would follow him.¹⁷⁸ This was, of course, a stroke of policy on the part of the Duke to enhance his own credit and is not by any means to be taken seriously.

It almost seemed as though the King were the only person who felt concern at the chaos into which politics had fallen. He now made a second endeavour to restore equilibrium by sending Waldegrave to order Robinson and Dupplin to accept the Seals and the Exchequer respectively, but both pleaded incapacity and declined.¹⁷⁹

Meanwhile the failure of Fox and the obduracy of Newcastle seemed to point to a union of one or the other with Pitt, and since the two men of the Commons were quite irreconcilable, the other alternative was expectantly awaited. Pitt's shuffling at the inquiry has been noted. It was obvious that the Duke needed Pitt's popularity and personality, and the latter required the Newcastle

¹⁷⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 203. Walpole writes (*ibid.*) that Fox made 'very humble overtures' to Leicester House; but such a story looks very much like one of Walpole's attempts to add sensational colour to his narrative. Fox was too keen a politician not to see the uselessness of appealing to a quarter which hated him; and we have already noticed that one of his dominating fears was the possibility of Leicester House gaining political ascendancy.

¹⁷⁸ Newcastle to Hardwicke, April 15, 1757: Add. MSS., 32870, f. 490.

¹⁷⁹ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 108.

clientèle in the House of Commons ; this he had had in some measure during his short Administration, but only on sufferance, as it were, and had the Duke been foolish enough to go into opposition, the Secretary's position in the Commons would have been worse than insecure. Under these circumstances, if Pitt's ambition were to be fed, he must let the Duke's name be cleared of all blame regarding Minorca. It was a fair exchange, and the rest of the world could clamour or not as it pleased. At present the hopes of Newcastle rose so high that he convinced himself that dread of Fox and a Cumberland Ministry (that phantom which could always conjure up terror !) would suffice to keep Leicester House firmly on his side.¹⁸⁰ Obviously a triumphant return of Cumberland from Germany might have shattered the fortunes of both Newcastle and Pitt.

During the very week of the inquiry an overture came from the Pittites through the Marquis of Granby, but it was almost too humble in its purport to be quite credible ;¹⁸¹ and it was followed shortly afterward by a rather ambiguous message to the effect that the Duke was too great to come in save as sole Minister. There was no overture whatever in the communication ; and it ended with a distinct threat.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, May 1, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32871, f. 1.

¹⁸¹ Robinson to Newcastle, April 22, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 443.

¹⁸² ‘ But if he found that D. of N. whispered in the Closet, or gave any disturbance in Parliament, or spoke anything about

One point of difference which appeared in the way of settlement was the place which Legge had vacated, and which Pitt on hearing that the other had made an underhand alliance with Newcastle,¹⁸³ was determined to confer upon Grenville. There were hopes, however, that the obstacle was not unsurmountable and it was on this ground perhaps that Newcastle resolved both to announce that he had received authority to form an administration, and, if possible, to come to terms with Pitt.¹⁸⁴ Devonshire strongly urged the Duke to secure Bute's co-operation (he would do so himself, but for Bute's coldness, which he attributed to jealousy of Fox),¹⁸⁵ and to this the magnate of the Whigs consented. Thanks partly to the mediation of the Primate of Ireland¹⁸⁶ (then sojourning in England) two conferences were held with the Groom of the Stole and Newcastle expressed himself satisfied with the result.¹⁸⁷ But all these efforts proved abortive.

to the disadvantage of the Administration, he might expect all kinds of hostilities from Mr. P.'—Message, Add. MSS., 32870, f. 469.

¹⁸³ Doddington (*Diary*, September 28, 1757) gives the details of Legge's secret intrigue ; and confirmatory evidence may be found in the Newcastle correspondence (Hardwicke to Newcastle, April 9, 1757). According to Doddington, Newcastle himself betrayed Legge to Pitt.

¹⁸⁴ Memorandum for Lord Granby (undated) : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 470.

¹⁸⁵ Stone to Newcastle, May 7, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32871, f. 35.

¹⁸⁶ Doddington, *Diary*, September 26, 1757 ; Armagh to Newcastle, May 12, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32871, f. 61.

¹⁸⁷ Newcastle to Chesterfield, May 7, 1757 : *ibid.*, f. 39.

An interview between Pitt and Lord Hardwicke resulted in a treaty which a week's reflection could not induce Newcastle to preserve.¹⁸⁸ The intention of Pitt, in a word, had been to confine the Duke to his own Treasury Board, and even there to set up Grenville as a restrictive influence.¹⁸⁹

Such being the situation, Newcastle was unable to decide whether to unite with Fox and encounter the dangers of his faction, or throw in his lot with Pitt and make himself, to use his own term, a 'dependant'.¹⁹⁰ It is interesting perhaps to pause and reflect upon these three prominent men, two of whom must unite, if a stable administration were to be formed, and only one of whom was looking for a small reward and not haggling over conditions. At present there seemed no way out of the difficulties. Courted by all parties and indispensable to all, the Duke of Newcastle worried himself nearly ill because the King insisted upon keeping Winchelsea in the Admiralty and making Fox Paymaster. 'I have no assistance,' he lamented, 'even by advice from anybody, and that is cruel upon me.'¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ 'I find the demands are so high,' he wrote to Chesterfield (*ibid.*) 'that it would be impossible to have them complied with. In this situation it is above me to say what is to become of the King and the public.' Newcastle certainly knew what had nearly become of *himself*.

¹⁸⁹ Pitt's terms are given in full by Walpole, *Memoirs*, II. 210-1.

¹⁹⁰ Memorandum, May 12, 1757: Add. MSS., 32871, f. 57.

¹⁹¹ Newcastle to Stone, May 22, 1757: Add. MSS., 32870, f. 122.

Fox and Devonshire were anxious onlookers. The former, as Newcastle complained, was the paramount influence in the Closet,¹⁹² but all he seemed to wish for in life was a subordinate office for himself and a few remunerations for his family ; and it was doubtless for this reason that he declared himself heartily desirous of the alliance which Devonshire was striving to bring about.¹⁹³ The First Lord was determined, on his side, that so far as his own wishes were concerned, the Pay Office should be kept ‘as a *sine qua non*’ for his friend, and that, Stone believed, Pitt would never consent to. Devonshire urged his predecessor at the Treasury to consider the importance of speedy decision, the King being reasonably impatient, and suggested that Newcastle should first get an authentic account of the specific terms the Pittites would require, and then lay a plan before the King. He also said warningly (in his interview with Stone) that the King’s resolution respecting Fox was fixed, and it would be impracticable to change it.¹⁹⁴ This last question affected Newcastle with horror ; ‘To make Mr. Fox Paymaster,’ he wrote to Stone, ‘declares him the *favourite*, and that will soon make him the *Minister*.¹⁹⁵ It would have been more correct to have said that

¹⁹² Newcastle to Lincoln, May 21, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32870, f. 113.

¹⁹³ Fox to Devonshire, May 8, 1757 : Torrens, II. 382.

¹⁹⁴ Stone to Newcastle, May 7 and May 21, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32871, ff. 35, 116.

¹⁹⁵ Newcastle to Stone, May 22, 1757 : ibid., f. 120.

Fox, by reason of being favourite, was to become Paymaster ; but it is interesting perhaps to note how exceedingly afraid both Pitt and Newcastle were of Fox, the former of his weight with the Commons, the latter of his influence in the Closet. Because of these two assets, he must be excluded —even from a post without influence.

At this juncture Hardwicke again contributed to the possibility of settlement and made an appointment with Pitt for the 25th—Bute and Newcastle to be likewise present.¹⁹⁶ But the meeting was as barren of result as the previous interview. Pitt insisted upon the seals of the Exchequer for Grenville,¹⁹⁷ and Newcastle refused to compromise the last vestige of his authority.¹⁹⁸ Let the Ministry be Pitt's, if need be, but never the Treasury Board.

On the 27th Newcastle became a prey to one of those fits of startling boldness which chequered his career. He went to court and announced to the King that he would try his fortune alone ; Fox should have no ministerial office, and Pitt was to be wholly excluded ; Lee was his choice for Chancellor of the Exchequer and Robinson for the Seals.¹⁹⁹ Hardwicke, whose besetting sin was

¹⁹⁶ Hardwicke to Pitt, May 23, 1757 : *Chatham Corres.* I. 217.

¹⁹⁷ *Memoirs of a Celebrated Character*, pp. 101–2. Pitt would have offered Legge a peerage as compensation.—Walpole to Mann, June 1, 1757 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 57.

¹⁹⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 216–7.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. II. 217–8. Newcastle's venturesome scheme failed to meet with the approval of Hardwicke. It is amusingly

nepotism, insisted ‘in the strongest manner’ that Anson should be Treasurer of the Navy, although the Duke would willingly have sacrificed his old accomplice in ministerial guilt for fear of a renewal of the inquiries.²⁰⁰ It is worth noting that in one of the Duke’s numerous lists Fox is put down for Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, besides a peerage for himself or Lady Caroline, or a pension for life on the Irish establishment ;²⁰¹ such would certainly have appeared an ample compensation. He soon decided, however, that ‘Paymaster’ had better be substituted then instead of later, and so the latter designation appeared in his final list to the King.²⁰²

The worst feature of the Duke’s scheme was his lack of support in the Commons. Egmont, Lee and Campbell, in spite of past assertions when the danger of being held to them seemed improbable, were now by no means desirous of managing the House, independent of Fox ;²⁰³ and Hardwicke declared the situation so complicated that he could not pretend to give good advice.²⁰⁴ Devonshire

characteristic of the latter that he should have expressed a strong preference for the broken-down Devonshire Administration.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, June 1, 1757. Hardwicke was always one of the most striking exponents of the policy of *laissez-faire*.

²⁰⁰ Newcastle to Devonshire, May 28, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32871, f. 155.

²⁰¹ List (undated) : Add. MSS., 32997, f. 164.

²⁰² List, May 27, 1757 : *ibid.*, f. 195.

²⁰³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 1, 1757 : Add. MSS. 32871, f. 186.

²⁰⁴ Hardwicke to Newcastle, June 1, 1757 : *ibid.*, f. 191.

believed Fox's assistance was indispensable, and on the 1st of June the Duke took advantage of a visit from his friend to explain the Newcastle programme, and make light of the delay in conferring the promised Paymastership—a scheme which the visitor had been able easily to penetrate, and (as the First Lord told Newcastle afterwards) 'did not relish'. Fox, in fact, being willing to do all he could in support of Newcastle at the head of the Ministry, felt considerable resentment that after his professions there should be so much trouble over something which the King had promised him. His Majesty declared the same morning (June 1) that he 'had promised Mr. Fox the Pay Office, he imagined he would expect it, and therefore he must keep his word'.²⁰⁵

Fox returned to Holland House, and the more he thought of this contemptible wrangling, the more disgusted he became. He was willing and glad to do anything in the way of settlement, was accepting an office to which no one else had laid a claim, and, if he purposed to become silent in the future sessions of Parliament, he at least would not meddle or oppose. The scheme was, he knew, to delay his kissing hands for the office, evidently because his coming in at all might keep others out, and the affected generosity on the part of his late chief goaded him to fury. In this frame of mind he sat down and wrote to Devonshire: 'The

²⁰⁵ Devonshire to Newcastle, June 1, 1757: Add. MSS., 32871, f. 195.

instant the Duke of Newcastle can deliberate about the day I am to kiss hands, the employment of Paymaster is an affront and not a favour. I will take the Pay Office from His Majesty most gratefully. I will *not* take it from the Duke of Newcastle. Taking it from His Majesty, I will support the Duke of Newcastle (his Minister) earnestly and constantly, without interfering in any species of Administration. But I will not take that place from a minister. My being in an employment lower than Sir T. Robinson or Sir G. Lee must be my own, it shall be no other man's arrangement. . . . I will have no conversation with the Duke till *I am* Paymaster ; as much as His Grace pleases afterwards. I can be a private man and (whatever else it is) I am sure *that* is honourable. But I will not go *when* and *if* it shall please the Duke of Newcastle into a place that in many people's opinion is a disgrace—in no man's, a promotion. . . . As to consequences, when I am in Wiltshire, let Leicester House govern or not, it is of as little consequence to me as anybody else. It is only beginning the next reign and my retirement sooner.²⁰⁶ The letter presents a striking example of the spirit of independence which underlay Fox's character, as well as his inflexible determination to leave the field of politics and place official prominence behind him. In his struggle for the Pay Office, as in most matters, Fox's motives were wholly selfish and self-interested ; but whatever

²⁰⁶ Fox to Devonshire, June 1, 1757 : Torrens, II. 387.

turns and zigzags he might be forced into in order to gain that end, he was too fully aware of his own political strength to submit to an act of humiliation from any of his enemies. Untiring services had won him the whole-hearted support of the King. Hence his coming appointment would not be a favour but a price.

Meanwhile the Pitt-Leicester-House coalition was as eager to destroy Newcastle's latest scheme as the latter had been to frustrate Fox's first bit of ministry-making. The Prince's birthday was on the 4th, and having been persuaded to play the rôle of arbitrator as a sign of his earnestness for the national welfare, he now took an active hand in the negotiation ;²⁰⁷ while Bute, for his part, had already prevailed upon Pitt to yield on the question of the Exchequer, and lost no time in reporting the good news to Chesterfield,²⁰⁸ who had been engaged to negotiate with the Duke.²⁰⁹ Newcastle asked the King's permission to treat, and the latter answered that he had no objection, only adding, 'But I pray you consider my promise to Fox.'²¹⁰

Apparently the Duke 'did not consider' the promise to Fox.²¹¹ Agreement was reached after

²⁰⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 218-9.

²⁰⁸ Chesterfield to Newcastle, June 3, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32871, f. 199.

²⁰⁹ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 111.

²¹⁰ The King to Newcastle, June 4, 1757 : Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, III. 130.

²¹¹ Newcastle, not naturally a vindictive man, and, anxious above all things to recover his old power, would apparently

several conferences between the two parties, but when the King found that Winchelsea was to be displaced by Temple, and Fox not designated, he peremptorily vetoed the arrangement. The disappointed Duke, who had thus failed to bully his master, now declined to come into any scheme in which the Pitt-Leicester-House party were not concerned.²¹² ‘Upon this,’ wrote Digby to Williams, ‘the King was angry and vexed, but determined to try anything rather than submit to the young court.’²¹³

Abandoned by Newcastle and abhorring the very thought of an overture to Pitt, the King turned once more to the man who had worked on a former occasion so earnestly in his behalf, and as a preliminary step he astonished the faithful Waldegrave on the 7th by asking him to take the Treasury. The Earl was to consult Devonshire

have been willing to accord Fox the Pay Office, had a treaty with Leicester House under such circumstances been possible. But Bute had assured him early in the present negotiation that the concession to Fox would ‘embarrass’ the whole effort to reach a settlement.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 4, 1757: Add. MSS., 32871, f. 216. So we may judge that either Pitt or the Princess was responsible for Newcastle’s attempted exclusion of Fox.

²¹² Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 113; Newcastle to Chesterfield, June 8, 1757: Add. MSS., 32871, f. 240. As usual Newcastle held every one but himself to blame. ‘My real crime’, he wrote later to a friend, ‘is not coming in with Mr. Fox. . . . The lies which are laid to my charge are supposed engagements with Mr. Pitt and Leicester House. That is false in every particular.’—Newcastle to Ashburnham, November 15, 1757: ibid., f. 313.

²¹³ Digby to Williams, June 12, 1757: Stowe MSS. (Brit. Mus.), 263.

and Fox that very day with respect to an arrangement,²¹⁴ in pursuance of which the late manager of the Commons would inevitably take the leading part. Newcastle, hearing to his dismay that the King had not yet accepted failure, tried *more suo* to thwart any enterprise which appeared indifferent to his own interests, and expatiated in the Closet upon the difficulties which Fox would encounter. ‘Others have told me otherwise,’ was the abrupt response. Meanwhile Fox’s answer was expected that day ; and the Duke, knowing that he would oblige the King in anything, assured Chesterfield that an acceptance was certain.²¹⁵

But Newcastle had still a card to play. The King had acted for the same reason as formerly—because he was in desperate straits ; but with proper determination they could be made more desperate, and, if the Duke were now set aside because His Majesty felt dignified contempt, then he must let the royal slave know that ducal might was not to be despised. To this intent, therefore, the servile Holdernesse consented to tender his resignation. The importance of such a defection at such a time was only too manifest. Newcastle wrote to him a note, urging him on the ground of ‘respect’ to acquaint the King as soon as possible,²¹⁶ and Holdernesse replied that he supposed

²¹⁴ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 117–8.

²¹⁵ Newcastle to Chesterfield, June 8, 1757.

²¹⁶ Newcastle to Holdernesse, June 8, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32871, f. 242.

he must not disobey if His Majesty asked him to remain until a successor was appointed. He also made the announcement (which Lady Yarmouth had hastily penned) that Fox had accepted the task desired of him.²¹⁷

The maker and unmaker of ministries was certainly confronted with difficulties which seemed insuperable, and though he wrote to Argyll, and eagerly ‘pressed men into the service’,²¹⁸ the refusals which he met with far outnumbered the acceptances. Halifax would not take the Seals, and Oswald, Lee and Campbell all refused to accept high positions ;²¹⁹ they knew that he had the authority to make offers,²²⁰ but there had been too many projected ministries on foot to bring this sixth one any popularity. On the same day (June 8) Fox had seen the King—probably to tender his services—and the King took the opportunity of reproaching him for having been the author of the confusion in October last ; nevertheless His Majesty commended him for his work in Parliament, and in a later audience ‘spoke to him vastly kind and tenderly’.²²¹

A meeting was held at Holland House that evening, and Fox did not disguise the fact that

²¹⁷ Holderness to Newcastle, June 8, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32871, f. 248.

²¹⁸ Fox to Bedford, June 14, 1757 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 245.

²¹⁹ Ilchester to Digby, June 13, 1757 : *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

²²⁰ Fox to Bedford, June 14, 1757.

²²¹ Ilchester to Digby, June 13, 1757.

success was extremely doubtful ; but there was no choice but to proceed, and the little junto put down Waldegrave for the Treasury, Fox for the Exchequer,²²² and Gower²²³ and Egremont for the two Secretaries of State. There was something almost ridiculous in this tiny nucleus of an administration.

The next day Holderness resigned, and the King told Waldegrave scornfully that the 'loss was not considerable'. Upon hearing an account of the conference the previous evening, he told his appointed Minister to hold another meeting, with Granville and Winchelsea added. This took place as ordered, and despite Fox's pessimism, adjourned in 'tolerable good spirits'.²²⁴

The following day (June 10) Newcastle strove to impress upon Waldegrave that he had not instigated Holderness's resignation, but when the latter told him that the King had reason to be displeased with his attitude, the Duke replied peevishly that he could 'cause so many resigna-

²²² This again illustrates how Fox was compelled for the moment to abandon his real aim. He had, however, the hope that if (against his expectation) his efforts should really become successful, he might eventually be transferred from the Exchequer to the Pay Office. Digby, writing after the affair was over, says 'Mr. Fox . . . seems very glad that he is not to be Chancellor of the Exchequer'.—Digby to Digby, June 11, 1757.

²²³ Gower is mentioned by Ilchester as having been designated for the Seals. Waldegrave omits his name in connexion with the first conference.

²²⁴ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 119–22.

tions as would give the court a very empty appearance'.²²⁵ Waldegrave waited later on the King, who showed that he shared Fox's dejection in regard to the undertaking, although Waldegrave buoyed up his spirits as best he could. Meanwhile Newcastle assuredly kept his word. The news spread that the Dukes of Rutland and Leeds, and many others,²²⁶ would not only tender their resignations but enter active opposition,²²⁷ and the Marquis of Rockingham, one of the most influential of the Whigs, followed their lead. Every one could see the hand that prompted this, and the student of the period may well be impressed by this example of the power of patronage; but the 'shuffling rascal' (to quote Fox's nephew) was 'ashamed of what he has done, and denies it'.²²⁸

At this crisis Horace Walpole, whose enmity toward Newcastle was most inveterate, set on foot one of those characteristic intrigues that no one ever took seriously but himself. Enraged by the resignations and sincerely desirous of extricating Fox, he went to him and urged a plan of his own, which was, to give Pitt the Seals and the Duke of Dorset the Treasury, to make Sackville Secretary-at-War, and to dissolve the present Parliament as a

²²⁵ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 124.

²²⁶ Nugent, Barrington, and Robinson were among the number.—Ilchester to Digby, June 13, 1757.

²²⁷ Digby to Digby, June 11, 1757: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*; Walpole, *Memoirs*, II. 221.

²²⁸ Digby to Digby, June 14, 1757: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

possible chance of ending the Newcastle domination. Fox showed no enthusiasm at the wild suggestion,²²⁹ but was willing (according to Walpole) to concur on certain conditions ; he would serve under Pitt at the Pay Office, or he would act under him without employment, reserving his right to abuse Newcastle as much as he pleased. But the counter-project was quickly abandoned, when Sackville announced that his attachment to Leicester House prevented his concurrence.²³⁰

One more meeting the little corps of ministry-makers held ; and this time Bedford and Gower were also present. Winchelsea and Granville were as sanguine as before, but Bedford far outclassed them, declaring that it would be infinitely the strongest Administration the country had seen for years. Fox, alone, was despondent.²³¹

It might seem strange, perhaps, that a man of such political courage and confidence should have felt so little of the hopeful spirit which pervaded his friends. Was he too well aware of the Newcastle power in the Commons, or was he, after all, reluctant to give up his more cherished desire for the lucrative Pay Office ? The truth probably is that Fox in his heart was only desirous of obliging the King and making sure of that reward which

²²⁹ The notion of starting the scheme with both Sackvilles was alone enough to condemn it—not to mention Dorset's executive incapacity. Finally there were several more important posts to fill than that of the Secretary-at-War.

²³⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 222–3.

²³¹ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 126–7.

he hoped thereby to win ;²³² furthermore it was he, not these noblemen-friends, who understood the real situation, and, when three days' untiring efforts had met with nothing but repeated failures—hardly counterbalanced, we should say, by the strength of this junto of peers—Fox was certainly not blind to the hopelessness of the struggle.²³³ The others saw only their own personal prestige and the delight of thwarting the Newcastles. When the meeting broke up, Bedford whispered to Waldegrave that his endeavours were sure to be futile, as they must have a chief actor in the House of Commons, and Fox ‘had not the spirit to undertake it’.

‘In spite of all our difficulties,’ writes Waldegrave, ‘it was still the opinion without doors that we were too desperate to desist, and that our plan of administration would be immediately executed.’²³⁴ The morning after the above conference,

²³² See above, note 222.

²³³ Great interest was felt in the formation of this Ministry, though it was also regarded with some contempt. A rather amusing description is given us of its reputation in the House of Commons. Ellis, on behalf of Fox’s projected ministry, moved (June 8th) an adjournment, apparently without observing that the enemy were in a majority. Sackville and Charles Townshend at once treated the matter as a joke, and the latter talked of proposing an address to the King ‘to desire he would form an administration’. The motion was straightway lost by a vote of 57 to 11; and ‘thus (writes Walpole) Fox lost a question even before he was Minister’.—*Memoirs*, II. 220; Digby to Digby, June 14, 1757.

²³⁴ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 128.

Ilchester met Mansfield, the leading advocate of a Fox-Newcastle alliance, who told the Earl with pointed candour: ‘Mr. Fox is going to ruin himself if he undertakes it with a majority in the House of Commons and the cry of the people violently against him.’ It was in fact another bit of evidence that no one of the three important personages could hope to form an administration without either of the other two. Probably Ilchester lost no time in telling his brother the comment of the Chief Justice, and Fox needed no further inducement to form his resolve of telling the King the project was impossible.²³⁵ Meanwhile Rutland came to Kensington, ready to resign his staff as soon as Fox should receive the seals of the Exchequer, which Mansfield was to deliver to him the same morning.²³⁶

On the way to the Closet, Mansfield met Fox, who was to follow him, and stopping the latter, he said that he intended to tell the King that the projected Ministry could not be carried out. Fox answered simply that if the King commanded him, he was determined to carry out the plan.²³⁷

Mansfield kept his word, and the King was convinced that the obstacles in the way of his obliging friend were too great to be surmounted.²³⁸

²³⁵ Digby to Digby, June 11, 1757.

²³⁶ Ilchester to Digby, June 13, 1757.

²³⁷ Dupplin to the Duchess of Newcastle, June 13, 1757: Add. MSS., 32871, f. 298.

²³⁸ Mansfield’s further advice was to ‘treat further with the Duke of Newcastle and Leicester House’.—Digby to Digby, June 11, 1757.

Furious as he was at the man to whom he imputed the failure, he bade the Chief Justice take back the seals, and gave him full powers to negotiate with Leicester House and the Newcastles.²³⁹ Once more was the Monarch forced to realize that ministers were not of his own choosing.

Fox entered the Closet immediately after Mansfield and repeated his predecessor's assertion that it was practically impossible to carry out the plan, although he would proceed with it, if His Majesty insisted. This the King did not insist upon, as he had already surrendered to Leicester House, and the despair which he felt was only too manifest. He spoke to Fox, however, with great kindness and told him that 'if it was in his power he certainly should be Paymaster, that he would do all he could, but he was afraid they would not let him make a page of the backstairs'.²⁴⁰ Thus ended the Fox-Waldegrave Ministry at the point, so to speak, where it began. Devonshire, Waldegrave, Marlborough, Gower and Bedford, who had been waiting without—three of them to receive appointments—were forced to disperse, but Bedford alone showed indignation at the result.²⁴¹

The unpleasant task terminated, Fox could not but feel relief, and meanwhile he hastened to soothe the irritation of the friend who had taken the matter more seriously than any of his confederates.

²³⁹ Mansfield to Hardwicke, June 11, 1757 : Harris, III. 131.

²⁴⁰ Digby to Digby, June 11, 1757.

²⁴¹ Hardwicke to Royston, June 12, 1757 : Harris, III. 132.

‘The execution of the business,’ he wrote, ‘(could not) have been set about with more haste or alacrity than it was. Yet I do not blame His Majesty, for when the Duke of Newcastle showed he could draw so many into so infamous a measure, the game was lost, and His Majesty and the country deprived (I will say so, though I was to have so large a share in it) of as able, as honest, and as firm a ministry as this nation and these times could furnish. I would not for the world accuse myself of having had any share in the defeat of such a system.’²⁴² Bedford may or may not have been easily propitiated, but Waldegrave, for his part, was happy in his release from an office for which he was unfitted ; and Devonshire, whose ministerial career was soon to reach its close, was contented with the staff of the Lord Chamberlain.

For Fox these days passed in anxious suspense. His brother and friends were inclined to believe that from foes so inexorable the Pay Office was scarcely to be expected,²⁴³ and Ilchester was moved to write a letter to Devonshire, imploring his intervention. In case of failure, he is to be ‘turned quite adrift’, wrote the sympathetic brother ; ‘he must then quit Holland House, alter his plan of living, and retire into the country ; and how shocking such an alteration at his time of life must be, is easier to be imagined than submitted to.

²⁴² Fox to Bedford, June 14, 1757.

²⁴³ Digby to Digby, June 14, 1757 ; Ilchester to Digby, June 13, 1757.

I look upon this as the very crisis of his life.'²⁴⁴ If not the crisis of his life, it was evidently a menace to the most cherished of Fox's hopes. But George II, with all his faults, was a man of honour, and he had made Fox's reward an unalterable condition of the present scheme.

The delicate task of pacification was shifted from Mansfield to his more deliberate rival, and Hardwicke had several audiences with the King, who exhibited an intense desire for a speedy termination of the chaos into which Government had fallen.²⁴⁵ The treaty which resulted showed the mark of compromise on all parties concerned. Winchelsea consented to give up the Admiralty, and so His Majesty was released from obligations on that point ; Hardwicke, on his side, secured the return of Anson to the Admiralty—a notable triumph considering the latter's unpopularity with the Pittites, but His Lordship had to concede the office of Attorney-General to Pitt's friend, Sir Charles Pratt, even though Charles Yorke had been Solicitor-General since November last and in point of seniority was entitled to the honour ; Legge came into place again at the expense of Grenville ; while Newcastle, on his side, gave up Stanley—like Pratt, an estimable *novus homo*—whom he had designated for a seat in the Admiralty. Finally, Henry Fox received the Pay Office—a concession of both parties to the King.

²⁴⁴ Ilchester to Devonshire, June 12, 1757 : Torrens, II. 393.

²⁴⁵ Hardwicke to Anson, June 15, 1757 : Harris, III. 134.

Other mutual gains and sacrifices there were, of minor significance, which need not be mentioned here, save that Temple, whom the King stipulated should not have an office that would necessitate frequent attendance in the Closet, became Lord Privy Seal, displacing Lord Gower, who succeeded Dorset (pensioned) as Master of the Horse. Rigby told Bedford afterwards that Gower had betrayed all Fox's confidences to Newcastle,²⁴⁶ which, if true, showed the perfidy of a politician who was in anxiety for his place. But in general the treaty might yield satisfaction to all parties ; while the nation—and especially the King—was relieved to see the end of an *inter-ministerium* (as it was called²⁴⁷) that had lasted nearly two and a half months.

²⁴⁶ Rigby to Bedford, June 18, 1757 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 249.

²⁴⁷ The term is coined by Walpole (*Memoirs*, II. 215).

CHAPTER IX

IN THE BACKGROUND

WHEN at last he received the post, on which his eye had rested for almost a year, Fox had seemingly turned his back upon an active career. For several months he had been out of office, but pressing duties of one kind or another had given him little time for indolence or enjoyment. Fixed in his mind had been a purpose, one from which he never wavered, and which may be traced, through all his futile ministry-making, and (less conspicuously perhaps) throughout all his work of defence for the Newcastles. He had won and preserved the favour of the King ; he had averted all chance of disaster from the monarch of patronage ; and he had reaped the fruit of his arduous task. He must now adapt himself to that life of inaction which circumstances had compelled, but to which inclination and talent were fundamentally so averse. One additional feature of the new departure in Fox's life should be noted—one which we shall be tempted sometimes to regret—and that is the termination of his long rivalry with William Pitt.

The relative situation of the two great rivals in July, 1757, is a reflection of the differences in temperament and policy between the two men. Commencing their careers at almost the same time,

they had advanced on nearly equal terms until December, 1754, when Fox was willing to accept a certain prominence at the cost of his ultimate political value. A year later found Pitt out of office and in Opposition, while Fox rose still higher, but only to find in less than a year that, careless of the broader principles at stake, he had shattered not only his independence but also that political prestige which had rendered him indispensable to ministries. But Fox's impending ruin gave Pitt his long-desired opportunity. The latter had persistently refused to assist a tottering administration, whose fortunes he would be expected to share, but whose policy he would not be allowed to formulate ; and hence, with an ambition so consuming that one almost wonders if it ever had its parallel, he had kept himself in irksome exclusion until the time should come when politicians must be forced to recognize his indispensable worth. In the autumn of 1756 the Administration of Newcastle had worn itself out ; and it was then, in a time of great national distress, that Pitt could come to the front and enforce his own terms. The short Ministry which followed was simply a makeshift. When at last Newcastle's exile could be safely terminated, and when Fox had already accepted the inevitable, it took nearly three months of haggling, without immediate regard to King or country, before the great architect of foreign policy could be satisfied ; and although his past career had presented a long series of widely

different and ever-changing principles, entirely dependent upon his ambition, and although nothing but his remarkable personality had saved him from utter discredit among his fellow-statesmen, nevertheless by confidence in his own genius and great political foresight, he had finally, without party, influence or royal favour, completely outstripped his rival and gained the power he had long coveted.

The political merits of the two men were therefore wholly different. In consistency of principles and in debating power Fox was far the superior of Pitt. He was also a master-hand in the political detail and drudgery for which Pitt had neither the patience, the health nor the capacity. Finally, he had (what Pitt had not) the aptitude for making useful friends. The former by his social nature and winning manner compelled affection despite his politics ; the latter lived in a mystic solitude to which few were given entrance, and few there were who realized his powers until a crisis allowed him to force himself upon the Government. Yet that very compulsion revealed the man ; and thus when the broader attainments and the ultimate output of these two politicians are to be relatively estimated, when it was a question of a political policy that might make or mar all future possibilities, it was Pitt's dogged perseverance and singleness of aim that won the battle. Fox might be said to have lived for the moment ; Pitt, for the morrow. It was Pitt alone who had known when to strike. Therefore the writer has

no hesitation in regarding Pitt as the abler politician of the two.

The Pitt-Newcastle Ministry was virtually Pitt's own Administration. The Duke was allowed to entertain bishops and patronize place-men to his heart's content ; but in foreign affairs he was no longer the grasping monopolist, dominating an inner clique of the Cabinet and launching into idle speculations in diplomacy. The nation had learned to know him, and Pitt had only revived him to make his subservience complete. The new commander needed Newcastle's majorities and Newcastle's party connexions, and these once assured, he need give no thought to a side of statecraft for which he had neither taste nor talent. To call Pitt a Whig would hardly be correct without qualification, but he was undoubtedly a great diplomatist, which Newcastle was not. Thus each of the two chief Ministers contributed a share to the maintenance of an unusually strong administration.

It is impossible within the compass of this work to detail the steps by which England threw off her military lethargy and rose to heights of glory seldom attained by any nation. The wretched incapacity of Cabinet, Admiralty and (sometimes) War Office during the years of Pelham rule have already been strongly emphasized ; when Pitt, therefore, took up his burden, he was practically required to commence a revolution. The Militia Bill and the Highland Regiments had been remedies for military inefficiency ; studious attention to

administrative details brought the Admiralty back to its former fitness ; and a vast improvement—to mention a specific case—was the new type of commander, both military and naval, which supplanted such men as Braddock, Byng and Loudoun. But the change was not so much the result of drastic reform, as it was the effect of Pitt's untiring energy, which permeated every department of diplomacy or war, and stimulated the whole activity of the state.

As a ministerial organizer of victory Pitt holds a place among very few in modern history. Carnot's reputation in the future was an enviable one ; but the great Frenchman could always feel that phenomenal *esprit de corps* of the French Revolutionists behind him, a force that was almost infatuation in its intensity. Such a spirit Pitt had practically to create. The patriotism of the British nation could never be utterly stifled, but nearly two decades of military stagnation and intermittent disaster had given no encouragement for a latent spirit to show itself. Hence the obliteration of this apathy was a feature of Pitt's work.

The popularity of the great Minister was but a natural consequence of his achievements. The long career of victory which crowned the English arms under Pitt's régime would take a separate chapter properly to enumerate and analyse. Clive won back India, and Wolfe and others conquered Canada ; on sea the squadrons of France were powerless and vanquished, while the firm alliance

which Pitt maintained with Prussia kept the attention of France fixed in a direction whence no decisive success could be obtained. The trend and scope of British foreign policy at this time must assuredly convince us that Pitt was not only an English minister of war but a great European statesman—one who knew how to discriminate between powers who were naturally enemies and those who were useful friends, and who entered upon a policy designed to influence many epochs to come. But more even than that, Pitt might be justly called a 'world statesman'. England appreciates the fact, and France knows it to her cost, that Pitt, though not the founder, was the greatest individual builder of the British Empire. The many colonial accessions which the British army and navy secured—in the West Indies, in America and elsewhere—were to place Great Britain on an imperial scale above any of her imperial rivals.

Such, in brief, was the result of Pitt's short Ministry. And yet, when all has been said and the Minister's qualities of greatness properly appreciated, we have to ask ourselves what the cause of humanity gained from the career of this remarkable man. It is when we dispel the visions of bloody fights and struggles for empire that we see the need—which this work has endeavoured to point out—of a man of sound and sturdy principles in English public life. Avarice alone excepted, Pitt possessed every fault that a politician is heir to. He revelled in his great struggle with France

just as he revelled in his feats of bombast in Parliament—they appealed to his passion for notoriety no less than they gave him an occasion for justifying the confidence which he had in his own powers. But in high conceptions of political morality he was wofully deficient. He preferred to court the populace with the arts of a demagogue rather than wait and win their favour through appreciation of his genius. To him principles were nothing but stepping-stones to power, and he changed them as frequently as might serve his political ends. While he vaunted his independence of the system of polities in vogue, he cringed and lied and shuffled as truly as did the men who avowed these practices, but worse than they (because less honest), he always pretended to possess a political virtue he never knew.¹ Much did he wade through in the days of his fluctuating politics and connivence at corruption before the chance at last was given him of saving the British Empire, or before he could seek (like Napoleon later) to grind out the life of a national foe. All

¹ We know that Pitt even used his gout as a political weapon ; and though it is not questioned that he was a great sufferer, the fact remains clear that he did a good deal of shamming, as may be seen, for example, when he unconsciously brandished the arm which was supposed to be disabled. At such times he naturally failed to get the sympathy he wished to evoke. On the whole it is doubtless due in very great part to his theatrical side that his words must frequently meet the charge of insincerity. ‘ Of all very great Englishmen,’ wrote Lecky, ‘ he is the one in whom there was the largest admixture of the qualities of a charlatan.’

the problems which his son and his son's great rival wrestled with in the later years of the eighteenth century might well have afforded material for Pitt's energy and rhetoric. But what he wanted above all else was power—to be got no matter how ; and the condition of politics was never more rotten than when Pitt clambered to fame on the shoulders of Newcastle.

Nevertheless History is ever lenient with a man who proves himself a genius. Pitt did more than any of his predecessors to impress the world with the greatness of England and the quality of her men ; and while from the liberal standpoint he was merely feeding a selfish public spirit with a series of remarkable victories, the conventional patriot will generally prefer his prowess to those services—less showy but more generous (and frequently more solid)—which constitute the heroism of a domestic reformer. Both Pitt and Fox were unscrupulous and self-interested ; but Pitt at least had the conception that the fruit of his ambition should result from services (of some sort) to his country. Whatever our criticism of his character or his motives or his choice of alternatives, it was better that he should have been as he was than have possessed the careless good-humour and indolent ambition of Henry Fox.

Having considered for a moment the changes which befell the Government in war and foreign affairs, let us turn again to the brilliant adventurer whose talents had ceased to be exercised in the

functions of the state. The nascent greatness of Pitt no longer admitted of a rivalry between the two. Fox was now in uninfluential retirement, his career in politics apparently ended, and his ambition—save for amassing wealth—completely buried. One could little foresee in the summer of 1757 that Fox would ever again play a conspicuous rôle in public affairs.

The conferment of the Pay Office necessitated his standing for re-election, and Fox as usual pinned his faith upon Windsor. But the great unpopularity which he had incurred, partly on account of his late complicity in the Newcastle Administration, and partly by reason of his retirement from official prominence to accept a lucrative employment, made his election at first extremely doubtful. The opposing candidate, a certain Mr. Bowles, received the support of a Jacobite subscription of £5,000 as well as the interest of the Beauclerk family,² which appeared to be of paramount importance in the constituency;³ finally, independent voters were also ranged on his side,⁴ doubtless out of enmity to his notable opponent.

Fox declared that he would not lose the election

² Rigby to Bedford, July 2, 1757 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 261.

³ It is worthy of note that two Beauclerks had been returned for Windsor in 1734, and one of them held his seat for this borough until the Parliament of 1754 when a certain John Fitzwilliams succeeded him.—*Official List of Members returned to Parliament.*

⁴ Jenkinson to Grenville, July 9, 1757 : *Grenville Papers*, I. 198.

for want of spending his money freely, but being no longer an important personage, he was unable to buy off opposition by threats or promises, and consequently decided to enlist Newcastle's aid in his behalf.⁵

The First Lord had no special reason to refuse, and the fact that the royal favour to Fox had been responsible for the contest at hand, had much weight with a man who—with all his faults—had a deep sense of the respect that was due to his sovereign. The Duke therefore worked with untiring energy for the cause, promptly ordered support from all in the borough who 'might depend upon the Treasury',⁶ and wrote besides to the Duke of Dorset asking him to use his influence with the Beauclerk family.⁷ Simultaneously Fox's personal friends, Devonshire and Marlborough,⁸ were active workers in his behalf, and Newcastle sent Barrington to give additional assistance.

On the 3rd of July the opposition appeared 'very violent', and Fox having been suddenly taken ill while the struggle was at its height, the

⁵ Fox to Newcastle, July 1, 1757: Add. MSS., 32872, f. 7.

⁶ Newcastle to Devonshire, July 3, 1757: *ibid.*, f. 47.

⁷ Newcastle to Dorset, July 3, 1757: *ibid.*, f. 45. This was at the suggestion of Devonshire, who had been personally requested by the King to lend a hand in winning over the Beauclerks. Thus we have reason to think that the King himself was greatly interested in the contest.

⁸ 'There is so much danger that they have sent for the Duke of Marlborough express about it.'—Jenkinson to Grenville, July 1, 1757: *Grenville Papers*, I, 196.

result appeared, for the time, extremely doubtful.⁹ But when Newcastle threatened to withdraw all support from his numerous dependents in the borough,¹⁰ there was magic in the act. News of a more encouraging nature was soon received at the Treasury, and Barrington was busied with drawing up articles for Bowles to sign, agreeing to ‘desist and let Mr. Fox come in quietly’.¹¹ Finally, after spending as much money as he could in so short a time, Fox was returned by a ‘great majority’,¹² and lost no time in acknowledging his obligations to the First Lord.¹³ The election had cost him all of £4,000,¹⁴ but the Pay Office would soon make such an expense a mere trifle. Meanwhile Newcastle was pondering what favour he might ask in return, and not long afterwards put forward a request for Fox’s assistance in a matter of patronage.¹⁵ Such were the politics of the Pelham school.

On the 7th Fox and Lady Caroline breakfasted with Dupplin, who resigned the Pay Office to his successor on the same day ;¹⁶ while the new

⁹ Rigby to Bedford, July 2, 3, 1757.

¹⁰ Newcastle to Pelham, July 1, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32872, f. 11.

¹¹ Pelham to Newcastle, July 3, 1757 : *ibid.*, f. 51.

¹² Newcastle to Devonshire, July 7, 1757 : *ibid.*, f. 116. The majority was said to have been 51.—Sleech to Weston, July 9, 1757 : *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report X, part I, p. 306.

¹³ Fox to Newcastle, July 6, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32872, f. 112.

¹⁴ Sleech to Weston, July 15, 1757 : *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

¹⁵ Newcastle to Devonshire, July 7, 1757.

¹⁶ Dupplin to Newcastle, July 7, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32872, f. 131.

incumbent, for his part, declared his intention to 'live and die Paymaster'.¹⁷ Yet Fox, with all his ambition to be rich, was not averse to social distinction, and if he had won the love of Lady Caroline Lennox notwithstanding his own humble ancestry, he was determined that she should have a peerage if it was in his power to procure one. The King had disappointed him in April,¹⁸ but Fox did not banish his hopes.

Shortly after his election the Paymaster wrote a letter to Newcastle on behalf of ex-Governor Fowke, who was now reduced to extreme poverty ; and Fox pleaded that 'there certainly could be no ill-intention mixed with his conduct at Gibraltar. Without His Majesty's bounty,' wrote the Paymaster, 'he must certainly starve. He has not a shilling in the world.'¹⁹ The letter would disprove any charge that Fox was devoid of humanity, and since the appeal was not repeated, we may suppose that the First Lord was generous also.

In the autumn certain events took place which, as they vitally concerned the Duke of Cumberland, had some bearing upon Fox as well. Repulsed in the Battle of Hastenbeck and driven into a hazardous position in close proximity to the Electorate, the Duke, instead of making a desperate resistance with the chances against him, chose, rather, to act in accordance with the latitude of

¹⁷ West to Newcastle, July 7, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32872, f. 127.

¹⁸ Page 121.

¹⁹ Fox to Newcastle, July 20, 1757 : *ibid.*, f. 271.

his instructions, and laid down his arms to save Hanover from devastation. On the 8th of September he entered into an agreement with Richelieu (known as the Convention of Stade or Kloster-seven), which determined that the troops of Hanover were to observe a strict neutrality, while those of Hesse and other small principalities which had been subsidized, were to return to their respective states. There is little doubt but that Cumberland had possessed full discretionary powers, and he had, moreover, acted in accordance with private instructions from the King, cautioning him with respect to Hanover.²⁰

But the old King, on hearing of the Convention, was as unreasonable as he was furious, and, according to Fox, ‘disavowed the Duke to every court of Europe.’²¹ Holdernesse was instructed to communicate to the offending commander His Majesty’s disapproval of the Convention,²² and a recall soon

²⁰ ‘H.R.H. this morning,’ wrote Fox on the 12th of October, ‘showed me the King’s letters, which are not full powers only but directions to prevent the army from being prisoners of war at any rate (cost), and to sign a treaty for that purpose if necessary without waiting for any formality or further directions from hence whatever.’—Fox to Bedford, October 12, 1757 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 275. Secret instructions, sent by the King without the knowledge of his ministers, represented a move easily calculated to make Cumberland a scapegoat in event of failure.

²¹ Fox to Bateman, October 13, 1757 : *Mackenzie Papers*, Add. MSS., 34526, f. 78.

²² Holdernesse to Cumberland, September 20, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32874, f. 165.

followed. But the French were the real dupes, failing perhaps to realize the loophole through which the Elector of Hanover could worm his way out and emerge the King of England. Mansfield, a member of the Cabinet in the new Administration, doubted if the compact could be repudiated, but Pitt (for it had been submitted to the English Ministers) had no compunction at all, and it was done.²³

Cumberland arrived at Kensington on the 11th, and Fox paid a visit to his apartments that evening, for which the Duke expressed his gratitude.²⁴ The latter was particularly desirous that Fox should write to Bedford that he was wholly justified in his action ; he insisted that he was perfectly sound in mind and body, and Fox remarked upon his cheerfulness.²⁵ After dismissing his visitor, to whom he explained his desire to avoid the imputation of receiving advice, His Royal Highness went in to the King, who positively refused to listen to him, only exclaiming, ‘Here is my son, who has ruined me and disgraced himself.’²⁶

²³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 8, 1757. Dr. Ward is inclined to condemn this repudiation on the ground that the honour of the sovereign is the honour of the nation.—*Great Britain and Hanover*, p. 193. Such a view would hardly have possessed weight in a cynical age like the reign of George II.

²⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 247.

²⁵ Fox to Bedford, October 12, 1757.

²⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 250. The King had already—so Fox told Bedford—written ‘a cruel letter’ to his son.

Touched to the quick, the veteran commander took the resolution of resigning, a step which Fox had secretly desired from the moment that he heard of the King's public repudiation. It was now the King's impulse to regret his hasty action, and he sent Devonshire to try to persuade the Duke to abandon his purpose ; but the Prince was firm, relinquished without delay all his military employments,²⁷ and retired to a life of inaction against which every instinct in his nature rebelled. Fox had seen his friend several times during these painful days, and Bedford consoled the Duke by sending him unqualified approval of his conduct. One of the most interesting features of the case was the defence which Pitt gave his old enemy—a circumstance which the Duke would rather have had otherwise,²⁸ but showed nevertheless a most noble spirit on the part of a man who was nearly always impulsive and sometimes vindictive. Cumberland retired to Windsor on the 14th, to become henceforth, as Fox said, ‘a private man.’²⁹ Yet despite this mortifying *dénouement* of a long and diligent, if not altogether glorious military career, Fox was able to write to a friend, ‘I never saw him more cheerful.’³⁰

Fox was necessarily absent from the House the

²⁷ Fox to Bedford, October 12, 1757.

²⁸ Bedford to Cumberland, October 12, 1757 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 275.

²⁹ Fox to Bateman, October 13, 1757.

³⁰ Fox to Bateman, October 17, 1757 : *Mackenzie Papers.*

first day of the new session, owing to the death of his favourite nephew, Lord Digby.³¹ Two of his intimate friends died during this last epoch in George II's reign. The Duke of Marlborough perished from fever while in military service on the Rhine in 1758, and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, who had returned from St. Petersburg in a state of insanity, finally took his own life on November 2, 1759. No man, save perhaps Rigby, ever held so enviable a place in Fox's affections.

Politics in the first years of the Pitt-Newcastle Administration were not quite so complex as they had been, now that a master-mind was governing the policy of the State ; but the intrigues which did occur deserve some mention on account of their bearing upon the events of the coming reign. One incident, significant of the new era at Leicester House, had taken place before the formation of the Ministry, when Sir George Lee, disgusted with the influence of Bute and Pitt at the Prince's court, resigned his employment at Leicester House and was succeeded by the Earl's brother, James Mackenzie. As far as the Ministry was concerned, the new arrangements seemed distasteful to only three persons : to George Townshend, who disliked the amnesty to Fox, to Charles, still offended at receiving no promotion, and finally to Halifax, who had been promised the dignity of Secretary of State for the Colonies, but found that Newcastle had no inten-

³¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 294.

tion of keeping his word.³² The abuse which he heaped upon His Grace in consequence was worse, as Rigby admitted, than the latter himself had ever indulged in.³³ Yet the quarrel was really as brief as it was bitter,³⁴ and Halifax being finally conciliated by a seat in the Cabinet, there was no further disturbance over the ministerial arrangements.

But unhappily peace in the political world did not rest upon rewards to the disappointed ; and the attitude and behaviour of Leicester House during these years sufficed almost to drive the Ministers to distraction. Bute's policy seemed roughly to be an endeavour to put Pitt under obligation to himself for his almost absolute power ; to give the chief Ministers assurances of good-will, while secretly trying to produce an estrangement between them ; and to undermine Pitt's influence in the Ministry whenever opportunity was favourable. In short, the little power in politics, which had contributed so largely to the recent settlement, was more than ever determined that its influence should be felt ; and if this result seemed obtainable in no other way, it might be reached through a system of patiently conducted intrigue.

³² Walpole to Mann, June 20, 1757 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 65.

³³ Rigby to Bedford, June 18, 1757 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 249.

³⁴ Halifax's demands were a Cabinet seat for himself and something for Oswald, who had resigned out of loyalty.—Barrington to Newcastle, September 26, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32874, f. 302.

Two men became ready instruments to the artful intriguer. Legge, who had felt that his faithful services had long merited promotion, was apparently disappointed that the Admiralty had not fallen to his share,³⁵ and was consequently easily enticed into his old pastime of backbiting. Bute was not slow to perceive his advantage, and listened with eagerness to the little Chancellor's grievances. Yet to Pitt, who was incensed at Legge's conduct, the Earl professed great desire for a reconciliation,³⁶ while to Newcastle he went so far as to hint that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be punished by removal.³⁷ When the friction had almost reached a crisis, it was proposed that Legge should receive a peerage for his wife,³⁸ a solution to which there could be no reasonable objection; and this settlement (which did not take place, however, till late in 1759) brought the trouble to a satisfactory end.

The other case was that of Holderness, the man who had so long been Newcastle's humblest vassal, and of whom the Duke had written in

³⁵ Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 22, 1757: Add. MSS., 32872, f. 301.

³⁶ Private Memoranda, March 17, 1759: Add. MSS., 32889, f. 121.

³⁷ 'A short account of what passed in my conversation with Lord Bute,' April 11, 1759.—Add. MSS., 32890, f. 10.

³⁸ Legge had desired a peerage for himself, but this wish, Newcastle told him, would not be gratified.—Legge to Newcastle, October 3, 1759: Add. MSS., 32896, f. 293. The King's antipathy to Legge was of long standing.

October, 1757, ‘Poor Holdernesse is as much a cipher as ever.’³⁹ In view of this statement, it is rather amusing to recall the First Lord’s jealousy more than a year before, when he conceived the notion that Frederick of Prussia reposed more confidence in Holdernesse than in the Duke himself.⁴⁰ The Senior Secretary was born to be a subaltern all his life, but sometimes, as now, he could be influenced to change his chief. At all events Bute induced him to transfer his allegiance and secured thereby an influence in the Cabinet itself.⁴¹

One of Pitt’s principles in his conduct of the war was to spend money lavishly as the surest means of recovering the lost prestige of the British arms. In view of various expeditions which failed, and also of the load of national debt which resulted from his Ministry, the great organizer has been severely

³⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 23, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32875, f. 222.

⁴⁰ Newcastle to Mitchell, May 28, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 128.

⁴¹ Holdernesse was no longer attached to any party but that of Leicester House, for he had offended Newcastle no less than Pitt. Writing to Mansfield on one occasion, the Duke thus pours his tribulation into the ears of the Chief Justice : ‘More distressed in administration nobody can be than myself,—insulted every day by that *chitt*, My Lord Holdernesse, not very agreeably or respectfully treated by Mr. Pitt, and yet so well treated by the King that I can’t well leave him. My whole dependence in business is on Lord Hardwicke and yourself. I shall soon come to a resolution not to meet when one of you two can’t be there.’—Newcastle to Mansfield, June 8, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32891, f. 496.

criticized.⁴² There is little doubt but that he saw that the expenditure heretofore had been entirely insufficient to ensure success, and the fact that he may have sometimes passed the bounds of financial discretion, was but a reflection of his own character, which knew no compromise. Bute was outspoken in his disapproval and declared that Pitt went too far in supporting continental measures; such a policy was, he believed, too costly.⁴³ The Groom of the Stole had made several other complaints recently, alleging that the Prince (by which he meant probably himself) was not properly considered, and that Pitt left too much to Newcastle, who should have only enough power to 'make the machine go', as the Earl expressed it.⁴⁴ Bute even went so far as to say that Pitt was 'governed'⁴⁵—a curious statement in view of events.

The Junior Secretary was not likely to be seriously disturbed so long as his control of the Foreign Office was undiminished, but he could

⁴² Fox (or one of his friends) put it clearly when he said Pitt 'broke windows with guineas'.—*Chesterfield's Letters*, III. 1228. From the military standpoint Pitt seems to have justified his conduct by success. Whether he might not have been content with the successes of 1759 and 1760 and stopped at that point is, of course, another matter. He certainly made no effort to restore peace.

⁴³ Newcastle to M. le Chevalier Osorio, October 11, 1758: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 323.

⁴⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 5, 1758: *ibid.*, f. 259.

⁴⁵ Newcastle to Yorke, October 17, 1758: *ibid.*, f. 412. This was probably said as a taunt, in order to arouse Pitt's jealousy of Newcastle.

hardly have failed to consider both the present monarch's years and what was likely to be pleasing to his heir.⁴⁶ Thus in December, when ill-feeling was more than usually manifest, Pitt determined to make a personal effort to come to an understanding. In the interview which followed Bute began by complaining that he was kept in the dark about certain things, to which Pitt replied shrewdly that he found Holderness had already played the part of informant, which seemed all that was necessary. After some explanation on this head Bute allowed himself to speculate as to what might happen when the Prince succeeded his grandfather ; he expressed well-acted astonishment when Pitt refused to picture himself in a Ministry without Newcastle (whom the Earl thought 'impracticable'), and finally broke out with unwonted spirit : 'The Prince will be glad of your services, but you must not expect this man to have this employment, and another, another.' Pitt answered that he was far from entertaining such an idea ; but the interview ended with little satisfaction to either side. Bute told Count Viri afterward that the Pittites hated Legge worse than Fox, but Leicester House would support the Chancellor of the Exchequer in spite of the fact. All this the wily Ambassador reported to Newcastle.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See chap. iv. note 166.

⁴⁷ Private Memoranda, December 19, 1758 : Add. MSS., 32886, f. 384.

The King lived generally on good terms with the man he had so long excluded, though once he showed a lingering desire to displace him by promoting Fox—a notion which Newcastle refused to consider.⁴⁸ The Duke made no attempt to trespass on his colleague's domain, and in spite of occasional horror at some act of tyranny, or some seemingly visionary scheme of conquest, showed little disposition to escape from his servitude. It was, however, fortunate for Pitt's vanity that he was occasionally reminded that he was not absolute. When Earl Temple threatened to upset the Administration by insisting upon a vacant garter (for which Leicester House supported Holderness⁴⁹), the Secretary found that nothing but a threat of immediate resignation could accomplish the end ; and, after he had brought Pratt's Habeas Corpus Act safely through the Commons, it was, to his great indignation, thrown out in the Peers through the efforts of Mansfield, Newcastle and Hardwicke. There was not much affection existing between the Chief Justice and the First Minister, and despite a reconciliation effected some time previously by Hardwicke,⁵⁰ it is noticeable that Mansfield was seldom in harmony with Pitt's views. Yet the latter's indignation in the present

⁴⁸ Newcastle to Hardwicke, May 16, 1758 : Add. MSS., 32880, f. 96.

⁴⁹ Private Memoranda, October 5, 1759 : Add. MSS., 32896, f. 302.

⁵⁰ Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 5, 1757 : Add. MSS., 32873, f. 468.

case may have been somewhat alleviated by the avowed support of Leicester House,⁵¹ and disliked by the Whigs as he knew himself to be, Pitt could see that he must regard Bute as a valuable source of support.

Intrigues were so rife in 1759 that some credence was given to the rumour that Newcastle had become politically reconciled with Fox, and that Bedford was to be Secretary of State.⁵² It was also persistently reported that Fox and Cumberland had made overtures to Leicester House, which were positively rejected.⁵³ Such reports, however, are so hard to explain that one may be inclined to doubt their truth. A possible motive on Fox's part would be the distant hope of winning a peerage for Lady Caroline, but in that case, would he not have been more likely to try his luck again with the present King? Finally, the story of the Duke of Cumberland paying court to relatives whom he had always hated is still harder to believe. Being now a civilian, the Duke had clearly no object to obtain by such concession.

⁵¹ Private Memoranda, December 19, 1758.

⁵² Memoranda for the King, May 2, 1759: Add. MSS., 32890, f. 438. It was about this time that Bute made some private remarks about himself, that are perhaps worth recalling. 'Why am I doomed,' he wrote to a friend, 'to climb ambition's steep and rocky height, who early in life had the meanest opinion of politicians—opinions that mature age and dear-bought experience too well confirm.'—Russell, *Life and Times of C. J. Fox*, I. 18.

⁵³ Private Memoranda, March 16, 1759, April 3, 1759, &c.

Meanwhile Holderness was sending Bute a daily account of everything that was on foot, much to the disgust of Pitt, who said that he 'knew . . . and despised him'.⁵⁴ Yet Viri assured the Secretary that Leicester House would support the Earl's removal, which, if true, shows the extent to which Bute's duplicity could go. During the remainder of the King's reign the political horizon was somewhat more serene, although Pitt and Bute quarrelled again in August (1760), and the former's repeated refusal to act without Newcastle made reconciliation most difficult.⁵⁵ Meanwhile Holderness was tolerated for some reason, probably because his removal might alienate Leicester House still more.⁵⁶

In Parliament—save in a very few cases—Pitt found almost invariable unanimity, and the Houses 'registered his edicts', much as he had warned them against doing in the case of Newcastle

⁵⁴ Private Memoranda, November 28, 1759 : Add. MSS., 32899, f. 164.

⁵⁵ Private Memoranda, August 8, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32909, f. 243. Viri, who seems to have been Newcastle's spy at the Prince's court, was the informant in the case of most of these 'private memoranda'. He seems to have been a close friend of Bute, but was naturally an intriguer, and very possibly overcoloured his stories on some occasions.

⁵⁶ According to Newcastle's account, on one occasion Pitt railed against Holderness's incompetence, but dared not suggest his removal for fear Leicester House should take his part and 'insinuate that the Duke of Newcastle was too great a courtier and he (Mr. Pitt) too great a republican'.—Business for Hardwicke, Mansfield and Stone Newcastle House, February 18, 1760 : Stowe MSS. (Brit. Mus.), 263.

in 1754. There was no opposition, for the Tories still hoped that their support would be rewarded, and the Whigs, thanks to Newcastle, were almost unanimous for the Ministry ; finally, the great debater, who might have been troublesome, had he cared to be, was inflexible in his resolution to keep clear of active politics. Thus Fox has little place in the parliamentary history of these years. He was one of the few in the Commons who opposed the Habeas Corpus Bill⁵⁷ and he is said to have voted later against Grenville's Navy Bill,⁵⁸ but in neither case have we any evidence that he made a speech attacking the measure. Almost the only time that he seems to have uttered a sound during these sessions was in the defence of Tyrawly, who was warmly prosecuted by Sackville for alleged extravagance in improving the works at Gibraltar. Tyrawly had informed Fox, when the latter was Secretary of State, that the great fortress was not only not so formidable as was supposed, but that 'it would want money, time and ability to make it so,'⁵⁹ and no doubt Fox was aware that the Governor had done commendable work in retrieving the neglect of many years past ; he had, moreover, a grudge against Sackville, who had deserted him when his cause appeared to be waning. Accordingly the Paymaster took pains to expose

⁵⁷ Walpole to Mann, May 31, 1758 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, IV. 138.

⁵⁸ Torrens, *History of British Cabinets*, II. 448.

⁵⁹ Tyrawly to Fox, August 20, 1756 : *Chatham Corres.* I. 200.

Lord George's underhand methods in pursuing the affair, and, when Tyrawly showed a disposition to attack his enemy on certain vulnerable points, the latter proved to be very willing to drop the case ; the Governor then cleared himself to the general satisfaction, and the House dismissed the affair.⁶⁰ It is not reported whether Fox voted for the Scottish Militia Bill, but he consented to Newcastle's suggestion that his friends should attend the debates ;⁶¹ and once the King had contemplated asking him to take a more prominent part in support of the Administration.⁶² Newcastle probably discouraged the proposal, knowing its futility.

It is reasonable to suppose that Fox was enjoying to the full his vacation from the cares and anxieties of official life. He was passionately devoted to his family, and he had many friends who enjoyed the hospitality of Holland House. Little indeed did it concern him that Bute's intrigues perplexed Pitt, or Holderness's affronts made Newcastle talk of resigning ; and although he had no liking for the man who was estranged from him of his own act and will, there was no apparent desire in the Paymaster to pursue his successor with wrath, or join in the various conspiracies against his absolutism.

⁶⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 291-3.

⁶¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, April 13, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32904, f. 343.

⁶² Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 20, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32896, f. 134.

Still one is tempted to wonder if the Ministers were not at times apprehensive of what might be going on behind the outward gaiety of Holland House. Fox had at least one interest still in politics, and that was Kildare. From all appearances the Duke of Bedford, with all his mental attainments, was as little fitted for the difficult problem of governing Ireland, as the Duke of Dorset had been ; and, if his reserve and precarious temper were not alone sufficient to make conciliation difficult, the avarice of his secretary, Richard Rigby, was certain to rouse hostility to his administration. The Duke had hardly commenced his rule, when, by virtue of Fox's influence, he showed marked partiality for Kildare, and, while such a policy would inevitably increase the enmity of the Opposition, Fox (though frequently consulted) seemed unable to persuade Kildare to ally himself with the Irish speaker as a means of strengthening their position. Matters grew from bad to worse, until finally the Primate, whom Fox once described as a 'false, artful, meddling priest',⁶³ waged successful war against the system of indiscriminate fees which formed such a large share of Rigby's increasing wealth. Consequently when the King had determined that the secretary should have a fixed salary and nothing more, Rigby was forced to persuade his master to give up Kildare, as the only means of suppressing the Primate. The ruse

⁶³ Fox's Memoirs, *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 27.

was successful. Bedford had been exceedingly loth to disoblige Fox, but once this policy was resolved upon, the Archbishop manifested no suspicion whatever of the proclivities of Rigby. One of the features of the Bedford programme was to minimize these disturbances as far as possible in all despatches to the Ministry, probably for the reason that the Lord Lieutenant knew that Temple was eager to succeed him, and that an excuse for the former's recall would not be hard to find. It was perhaps the need of a safeguard that led the Duke (under Fox's auspices) to become more closely allied with Newcastle; and this union, it might be noted, made the Whigs a solid phalanx, with perhaps the single exception of Fox, who was not an active supporter of any party, and Pitt, who had placed so much of his reliance upon Leicester House and the Tories. The differences which later sprang up between Bedford and the Junior Secretary appear to have had their origin in these Irish turmoils.⁶⁴

In the Cabinet, while George II lived, Pitt preserved a complete ascendancy; nevertheless, true as this undoubtedly is, distinct signs of future discord appeared when it began to be suggested that the war had gone on long enough, and it was time to think of peace. More than once during 1759 Frederick the Great had made it known that he favoured a cessation of hostilities, but neither Newcastle nor Hardwicke could move Pitt to

⁶⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 279-81, 353-60, 404

consider the matter, and when the new King of Spain made a show of interfering, Pitt worded a reply, which brought the matter to a sharp conclusion. Later it appeared that the Court of Madrid was looking for some really tangible advantages, and Wall sent Abreu a list of three demands (one of which was the right of fishing off the Banks) in return for the cordiality which Spain was willing to preserve. The question was a vexing one, and it needed much skill to concoct a solution ; but the English Ministers seemed quite unable to deal with the affair, Pitt having no arts of diplomatic conciliation, and the rest of the Cabinet shirking the responsibility.

Meanwhile France, more seriously desirous of peace than any of the powers, was not long behind her neighbours in expressing a desire for the war to end. In the spring of 1760 an overture was received, through indirect channels, by the English Court, but which Pitt declined to consider seriously, particularly as peace was far from being his desire. When Newcastle suggested that England could ill stand the great expense another year, the Secretary retorted angrily, ‘ We are a hundred times better able than the French.⁶⁵ We don’t want

⁶⁵ This explains Pitt’s position exactly. The question of whether the nation could well stand such great expenditure was to him a matter of indifference. He had always his eye upon France, and in a struggle between the two countries he rightly conjectured that the ruin of France—if it were a question of ‘ruin’—would be greater than the ruin of England. Further than that Pitt did not seem to care.

a peace !' and 'in short', wrote the First Lord, 'there was no talking to him.'⁶⁶

It was unfortunate perhaps that the self-interest of Frederick and the restless genius of Pitt made any agreement on the date for peace almost impossible. A few weeks after his altercation with Newcastle, Pitt told Knyphausen (the Prussian Ambassador) that England and Prussia must seriously consider peace, that the former could not support the war in Germany upon the present footing, and that Frederick must make some such sacrifices to Russia as would lead her to come into their own 'system', and then, he added, 'we might wage war to eternity'.⁶⁷ Such dreams could not, of course, be taken seriously by the Prussian Monarch, but they tempt one to believe that Pitt was either completely intoxicated by his success or else fixed in his determination to pursue the war until the nation which under Louis XIV had once been the bane of Europe, should be reduced to the position of a second-rate power.

But before the Pitt-Newcastle Administration could carry any programme of peace or war to its proper conclusion, the long-awaited day had arrived for Leicester House to emerge and take the

⁶⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, April 9, 1760: Add. MSS., 32904, f. 278.

⁶⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 17, 1760: Add. MSS., 32911, f. 361. Newcastle longed for a day when the allies would find that England was 'in earnest for *peace*'.—Ibid. Hardwicke termed Pitt's expressions, '*fanfaronade*'.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 18, 1760: ibid., f. 381.

central position in the scene. On the 25th of October death came to the old King suddenly and peacefully. ‘Full of years and glory,’ writes Walpole, ‘he died without a pang and without a reverse,’⁶⁸ thus ‘ending (to add Fox’s comment) a long, and for a King’s, a happy life. It was not the fault of nature or of fortune, but his own, that it was not much happier.’⁶⁹ Whatever were the faults of George II, and however little he really cared for the great nation over which he ruled, he was a sovereign who combined a certain pride, which the dignity of his office required, with a tacit consent to the constitutional methods by which the country mastered its problems. He lent a ready ear to the business of the kingdom, never, save on one occasion, seriously obstructed his Ministers, however little he may have liked them, and just as he could be vindictive towards one whom he hated, so he was naturally loyal to one whom he liked, without, however, giving him the opprobrious rôle of a ‘favourite’. Fox had always been an obliging subject, and he earned the gratitude which the King had shown him.

The succeeding monarch, at this time a man of two and twenty, had more than his grandfather’s quality of stubbornness, and probably greater strength of character than any sovereign England had seen for many reigns. Yet Waldegrave, who

⁶⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 454.

⁶⁹ Fox’s *Memoirs* (in the volume *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*), p. 3.

saw him grow to manhood, was pained by his aversion both to business and pleasure. An unbiassed portrait from the pen of the Prince's governor⁷⁰ depicts him as inherently honest but lacking in frankness, indolent and yet sullenly obstinate, and (partly from his narrow education) strongly prejudiced. Obviously his indolence must have been the result of early environment—particularly the monopoly of business by his mother and her favourite—for no monarch of England in modern times took so vital an interest in the art of kingcraft, or applied himself more diligently to the task of directing the great machinery of government. There is some justification for believing that, had he been of a less active temperament, the state would have been spared many misfortunes in his long reign.

But for the first few years of his rule George III was overshadowed. On the day of his accession the King invited Bute to accept the Seals, and pressed him so strongly that the Earl had to beg him to 'say no more of it'.⁷¹ That Bute had conceived no notion of embarking on a public career is quite impossible to believe, but it seems clear that he had the sagacity to avoid an act that savoured of revolution, and would bide his time until he could more opportunely slip into active office.

⁷⁰ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, pp. 8-9.

⁷¹ This was told to Newcastle later.—'Account of what passed with the King,' March 6, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32919, f. 485.

Meanwhile he intrenched himself firmly in the King's favour, and remained ever on the alert to gather additional strength.

So much has been said of the great reaction which took place on the accession of George III, and the regeneration of the Tory Party, that nothing new can be added here. The atmosphere of Leicester House, the narrow and inefficient education of the man when Prince, and his own indomitable will were in themselves sufficient to instil into the Monarch an almost rabid ambition to revive the ancient prerogatives of the Crown and gather about himself the faithful Tories as a grim battalion to enforce his power. Since it must appear that a counsellor was necessary, the King was fain to delegate his entire policy to Bute, and the latter's influence over the Princess Dowager was all that remained to give the royal programme unity. Obviously the first step in such a policy—whether marked out by king or counsellor, one can hardly say—was the difficult task of annihilating the great Whig families who had so long been the dominating political element in the state. The 'King's Friends', as the active supporters of the Court came to be called, were of necessity the party which followed Bute and sounded the knell of coming disaster to the Whigs. This new Toryism, so different from the anti-national type of earlier days, had for its emblem the principle that authority should come from above, confidence from below ; the sovereign's will should be supreme

and ministers responsible thereto. That such a tenet could never receive its fullest realization was due to its utter impracticability in a country with worthier traditions, but that this sovereign was able at all to interpose and frequently decide an issue, must prove the perseverance that informed such a programme.

But why was such a political revolution able so easily to take shape ? The answer may be readily found in glancing at the forces in the governing circle. The Whigs, constituted as they were, and possessed of such qualities as they had, were fated sooner or later to reach the end of their long career of power. Selfish policies, and, too often, disgraceful incapacity, had made them as a party unable and unfitted to cope with the exigencies of the times. It was well enough when Walpole's pacific administration governed the State ; for the innate evils which lurked beneath his domination were hindered from showing their destructive elements ; but when the Pelhams essayed to take his place, and a far less able man was resolved to institute an absolutism, the kernels of dissension were bound to disclose themselves. We have only to recall the triumphs of the Cumberland Party and the insidious opposition of Leicester House to realize the truth of this. The Whig Party became intoxicated with its power ; the servile Parliament, which cringed at Newcastle's word, had failed to please the nation, failed even to satisfy itself ; and so when a new and virile

force was set against it, the party had no real unity with which to combat it. The year of absolutism which had succeeded Fox's installation at the Foreign Office might be called the last struggle of sovereign Whiggism to maintain itself ; and now, when the Great Commoner's genius was giving it a false vitality, that discord was ever present—even in the Cabinet, where none but Whigs held sway. Had Newcastle, the acknowledged leader, and Devonshire, the acknowledged type, possessed the qualities of stability, and had Pitt been of a temperament that might have won the affection and confidence of his colleagues as well as their distant admiration, the party which nominally swayed the Cabinet and Commons could not have been so easily broken. But this is speaking of conditions that were not.

The events in the first Cabinet of George III and the politics within and without deserve at least a cursory treatment because of their bearing upon the later conduct of Henry Fox. Naturally the first speculations of the new reign were concerned with the possibility of changes in the Administration. Holderness was at present the only Minister in favour at Court, and yet Bute himself, as we have seen, had refused to receive a higher distinction than that of a major-domo, controlling but not transacting. The question for primary consideration was the headship of the Treasury. Newcastle offered to resign, and, when his remonstrances were politely parried, announced

that he would suspend decision until he had seen his friends ;⁷² after which, he gave his consent ‘to do what’, writes Fox, ‘he never seriously thought of not doing.’⁷³ Yet we may give the old Duke some credit for delicacy, notwithstanding his failure to comprehend that a new epoch had commenced—one in which he had properly no place.

When the First Lord had betrayed his misgivings to the King, the latter replied, ‘I desire you will continue in the Treasury. Nobody can do me so much service there as you.’⁷⁴ Less than two weeks later the Duke complained, ‘For myself, I am the greatest cipher that ever appeared at Court; the young King is hardly civil to me, talks to me of *nothing*, and scarce answers me upon my own Treasury affairs.’⁷⁵ Poor Newcastle was just beginning to realize that the Treasury was his only

⁷² Newcastle to the Duchess, October 28, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32913, f. 405.

⁷³ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 8.

⁷⁴ When the Duke finally announced his acceptance, the King said, ‘My Lord, I thank you for continuing in your office. I am sensible of your zeal and abilities, and I will not only give you that countenance and support which are necessary for your carrying on my business; but also such as shall make you easy and happy.’—Jones to the Duchess of Newcastle, October 31, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32913, f. 485. No doubt we have here an instance of George III’s duplicity.

⁷⁵ ‘Is this,’ laments Newcastle, ‘giving me the “countenance and support” which is (*sic*) necessary for me to carry on His Majesty’s business, much less what is sufficient for making me “happy and easy”? *Bien au contraire!*’—Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 7, 1760 : ibid., f. 171. See the preceding note.

on sufferance, and that power was no longer centred in the Whigs.

But the venerable Duke was not the only one to mark a change. When the King's speech, written by Bute, and submitted to the Cabinet, revealed the words 'a bloody and expensive war', the great master of foreign policy was forced to argue for three long hours before he could prevail upon the framer to consent to any alteration;⁷⁶ and though he commended the speech in most other respects,⁷⁷ Pitt could not but observe that a reaction from his policy was imminent. Bute had meanwhile been honoured with a seat in the Cabinet Council, and the Court had shown its measure of defiance by giving a cordial welcome to Sackville,⁷⁸ the man whose gross disobedience at Minden had brought upon himself the merited censures both of Pitt and of the nation at large. Ever recurrent were the tokens of the new force in politics; Bute, and no longer Newcastle, was the chief dispenser of favours; the Tories—or at least many of them—had congregated at the Cockpit to hear the reading of the royal speech; and more significant perhaps than all

⁷⁶ Fox himself was too keen a reasoner not to see the force of Pitt's objections, and evidently approved of his conduct on this point. 'I believe,' he writes, 'Bute did not wish to make the King avow the war or engage to carry it on, nor indeed intend to carry it on a moment longer than he should be forced to it. And yet surely these alterations were very proper.'—*Memoirs*, p. 6.

⁷⁷ Autobiography of Shelburne, Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, I. 43. ⁷⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 11.

other features was the evident determination that the elections to the new Parliament in the spring should not be under Newcastle's superintendence. The Duke, in lamenting this, declared that it was only a question of weeks, perhaps of days, when he should take steps to retire.⁷⁹ Yet seventeen months of similar treatment were required to make him take that resolution.

Fox might regard himself as most fortunate to be outside the sphere of these political broils. He had no ambition now, save perhaps the peerage for Lady Caroline, which he had been so eager to obtain in the preceding reign ; and it is not unlikely that this was the Paymaster's motive in cultivating an acquaintance with Bute. In November Fox again placed the matter in the hands of the Duke of Cumberland, who acted with great kindness and affection toward his friend, yet could not repress the reluctance he felt in seeking a favour from his royal nephew, however sincere had been the latter's recent professions of goodwill ; and so the Duke delayed his application until the 19th of February, when the King told him—not without warm praise for Fox himself—that the number of peerages had already been fixed. So far Fox had not resorted directly to Bute's influence, believing it more profitable if the latter should be able to quote the matter as a favour to His Royal Highness only, and thus refrain

⁷⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 7, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32915, f. 332.

from arousing jealousy in other competitors.⁸⁰ But unfortunately this seems to have aroused the jealousy of Bute, who feared that his power of securing the boon was questioned ; while Fox, for his part, was discouraged with his failure, and unable to comprehend Bute's attitude.⁸¹ A few days later,⁸² by courtesy of Lord Fitzmaurice, a friend of Fox, who had probably succeeded in mollifying the Earl, the Paymaster had an interview with His Lordship, and was promised that the peerage should be conferred at the next promotion,⁸³ which (when Fox pressed for an approximate date) Bute said would take place within the year. The Earl afterward assured his friend Fitzmaurice that it was a promise, and he meant it as such.

It is an instance of the fact that Fox's retirement gave him more time to consider his family, that most of the notable events in his life during this period were concerned with them in one way or another. In Ireland, Kildare, whom Fox always faithfully supported, was engaged in spirited opposition to the Lords Justices, who, led by the

⁸⁰ *Fox's Memoirs*, pp. 24-5.

⁸¹ Fox to Fitzmaurice, February 20, 1761 : Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, I. 162. ⁸² February 27, 1761.

⁸³ 'And I do not say this without authority,' he added, 'that is, if I continue in the same situation with respect to His Majesty's good opinion.' Fox thanked him, but wished a definite time set, as there was sometimes so long an interim between one creation of peers and another.—*Fox's Memoirs*, pp. 25-6.

Primate, had tried to get a new Parliament convoked without the usual formalities ;⁸⁴ and Fox went so far as to express himself in favour of dropping the Primate from the Board of Regents—a solution which he had long ago urged without success when Hartington was Lord Lieutenant.⁸⁵ Bedford, who stood with Kildare in the matter (against popular opinion), had the strange fortune of being burned in effigy in Ireland, and thanked by the King of England.⁸⁶ The Cabinet and Privy Council, with the single exception of Pitt, both sustained Bedford ;⁸⁷ but later a ‘trifling tax’ (to quote Fox), which was communicated to the Ministry, received the approval of the Newcastle faction, and hence of the Cabinet, Mansfield having

⁸⁴ According to the customary interpretation of Poyning’s Law, two or more bills had to be sent over to the English Privy Council as sufficient justification for the calling of a new Parliament, and one of them was customarily a money-bill. The Primate (though he failed to gain Bedford’s approval) instigated the omission of a money-bill, apparently on the ground that it would cause ferment and the Irish Parliament would not pass it.—Lecky, *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, II. 62. It is odd to find the Primate the champion of a policy pleasing to the Irish party, but Walpole is probably right in saying that he was trying to ‘court popularity’.—*Memoirs of George II*, I. 23. The dependence of the Irish Parliament upon the home Government had long been resented.

⁸⁵ ‘These,’ concluded Fox, ‘are my politics.’—Fox to Bedford, December 20, 1760 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 428.

⁸⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 24.

⁸⁷ Ibid. ; *Fox’s Memoirs*, pp. 17–19. The Lords Justices laid great stress on the fact that Pitt did not concur with the others (Fox to Bedford, December 20, 1760 : *Bedford Corres.*

deserted Bute on the question. Kildare, who had persistently opposed the late measures, was created a marquis at the instance of Bedford, and Fox noted with pleasure that the Ministers had endorsed the Duke's proposal.⁸⁸

Of but slight importance comparatively, yet perhaps deserving of notice, because it somewhat concerned Fox, was the strange conduct of the Duke of Richmond, Fox's brother-in-law, and once his ward. When the King had ordered Bute to sound the young Duke as to whether he would like a place in the Bedchamber, the latter not only received the attention with pleasure but wrote an application without delay ;⁸⁹ yet for some reason the Duke followed up this act by casting slurs upon Bute in a most open manner. When he next saw the Earl, either from the latter's coldness (as one authority states⁹⁰), or because he thought to ingratiate himself when Bute had told him that he was to have the employment, the Duke took pains to disclaim all connexion with Fox. Bute replied severely that there would be no objection in any case, since Fox was 'a man of talents,

II. 428), and Fox raps him for attempting to curry favour with the Irish people, since constitutionally the question admitted of but one decision.—*Fox's Memoirs*, pp. 18–19. When the message to the Lords Justices was drawn up, Pitt carefully absented himself.

⁸⁸ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 34.

⁸⁹ Letter of Richmond, June 21, 1783 : Doddington, *Diary* (ed. 1822), app.

⁹⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 26.

ability and character',⁹¹ whereupon the youthful Duke apparently held his tongue.

Less than a fortnight after Richmond had kissed hands, a fresh difference arose, when Fitzmaurice and another lord were given military preferments⁹² over the head of Richmond's younger brother, Sir George Lennox. The Duke, with his usual impulsiveness, went straight to the King, and after an angry interview, resigned his new office, though retaining his regiment—a fact which caused some surprise. When at last the Duke had time to repent of his folly he went to Bute and tried to explain away his resignation, but, far from treating him seriously, the Earl advised him to seek the counsel of his brother-in-law.⁹³ Whether the Duke did so, and whether Fox signified the disapproval he probably felt, does not appear.

Of far more importance than the childish rebellion of the Duke of Richmond was the narrow escape which Fox had of becoming the power behind the Throne. Lady Sarah Lennox, a younger sister of Lady Caroline, was far famed for her remarkable beauty, and when the young King met her in 1759—while yet Prince of Wales—he was noticeably much attracted. Two years later, the King, now certainly in love with her, actually

⁹¹ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 22. Bute's reply, as given by Walpole, is practically the same as that given by Fox. Perhaps the latter was Walpole's informant.

⁹² Not places in the Bedchamber, as stated by Walpole.

⁹³ *Fox's Memoirs*, pp. 23–4.

proposed marriage on one occasion when he saw her at Court ; meeting with no response to his first attempt, the King renewed his efforts some days later, and this time Lady Sarah appeared so disconcerted or ruffled that the King left her, much abashed.⁹⁴ In all this, Fox, who had the guardianship of his sister-in-law (then scarcely seventeen), was most keenly interested. Albeit he was undoubtedly reconciled to the loss of his political prominence, he could not but succumb to the temptation of encouraging—passively at least—a match which might render him the governing factor in the State. For a time Lady Sarah was left alone at Holland House, while Fox was spending a few weeks by the sea, and each day the King saw her as he passed by on horseback.⁹⁵ On his return Fox made an opportunity for sounding the King, and not only became convinced that it was a genuine *affaire du cœur*, but hinted to Lady Caroline that he believed His Majesty was resolved upon marriage.⁹⁶

For many months the royal love-affair was the chief topic of conversation among courtiers and politicians, and on the 18th of June the King, who

⁹⁴ *Fox's Memoirs*, pp. 26–8.

⁹⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 50.

⁹⁶ ‘Don’t tell Lady Sarah that I am *sure* he intends to marry, for I am not *sure* of it. Whether Lady Sarah shall be told what I am *sure* of I leave to the reader’s judgement. I am *sure* he loves her better than Lord N. does.’—Paper addressed by Fox to Lady Caroline, April 1761 : *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, pp. 101–2.

had seen Lady Sarah many times at Court, betrayed himself without reserve (and loud enough for the Marchioness of Kildare to hear) saying among other things that if her sister had left town, as he heard she was about to do, he would have been miserable.⁹⁷ Yet at that moment the King knew that the affair was over. The Earl of Bute had no intention of losing his influence at the hands of his new friend, the Paymaster, and negotiations for a marriage with a princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz were hastily pursued. Fox, after seeing the King later,⁹⁸ said that His Majesty 'was ashamed and well he might (be)';⁹⁹ and Lady Sarah wrote to her confidante that the King was a 'hypocrite' and had 'neither sense, good nature nor honesty'.¹⁰⁰ Yet she had twice thrown away her chance of becoming queen, and her coquetry was as marked as the duplicity of the man who really loved her.

Fox had doubted the rumours of the real import of the meeting which he and other Privy Councillors were summoned to attend on the 8th of July,¹⁰¹ and he felt natural indignation when he learned that

⁹⁷ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 49.

⁹⁸ The occasion was a meeting of the Privy Council (Fox was, of course, a member) at which the royal betrothal was announced.

⁹⁹ Fox to Ilchester, July 9, 1761 : *Life and Letters of Sarah Lennox*, p. 107.

¹⁰⁰ Lady Sarah Lennox to Lady Susan Fox-Strangways, July 7, 1761 : *ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁰¹ Fox to Ilchester, July 7, 1761 : *ibid.*, p. 107.

his strange scheme had been frustrated.¹⁰² Still he might be pleased in general with his treatment by the King. On the 6th he had taken his eldest son to Court, and His Majesty had been ‘civil to him in the greatest degree possible’.¹⁰³ A few weeks later he felt sufficiently sure of his ground to inquire about the peerage, and was told that it could not be granted till late in the next session—Fox believed, at the end.¹⁰⁴ There was the chance—which no doubt had led the Paymaster to be hopeful—that peerages would be granted at the time of the royal wedding; but it was said, probably with truth, that the Princess, having learned of his attempt long ago to interfere in her household, was throwing her influence into the scale against him.¹⁰⁵ The lady was sufficiently vindictive to make this credible.

The world of politics had not been uneventful while Fox was striving for his peerage or seeking to supplant Bute. Early in December 1760, Newcastle wrote to Hardwicke that he knew Bute and Pitt were desirous of a Tory Parliament as a means of breaking the Newcastle influence, and some prophesied an ‘inundation of Tories and Stuarts’. It was only too evident that the old borough-monger had no longer the handling of the purse.

¹⁰² Captain Napier’s Memoirs: *Life and Letters of Sarah Lennox*, p. 94.

¹⁰³ Fox to Ilchester, July 7, 1761: *ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁰⁴ Fox to Ilchester, July 30, 1761: *ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, IV. 92. See vol. I, p. 108.

Men came to him to be bribed, and he had not wherewithal to bribe them.¹⁰⁶ Nor was this all; a few weeks later, as another sign of the coming struggle, the two magnates quarrelled over the filling of a vacant lieutenancy.¹⁰⁷ The meddling envoy from Turin, seeing the trend of politics and hoping to hasten the crisis, urged Bute to procure the Seals;¹⁰⁸ but such a step the Earl was still unwilling to take, although he made no disguise of the pleasure which the idea gave him, and all this Viri reported to Newcastle.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the only consolation which the First Lord had found of late was in some encouraging professions from Cumberland and Fox, the latter leaving Newcastle with the belief that he favoured the continuance of the Administration as it then stood.¹¹⁰ One may be inclined to believe that Fox had very little interest in the matter.

¹⁰⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 7, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32915, f. 332.

¹⁰⁷ Newcastle to Devonshire, December 19, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32916, f. 207.

¹⁰⁸ In the meantime Viri cleverly advised Newcastle to speak to Bute in confidence, and find out the names of those who were incriminating him to the Court. This was obviously a ruse to shake the Duke in his natural belief that Bute himself was the guilty party.—Private Memoranda, December 19, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32915, f. 358.

¹⁰⁹ Private Memoranda, January 21, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32917, f. 461.

¹¹⁰ Newcastle to Devonshire, December 19, 1761. Possibly Fox was hoping by a threatened intrigue to put pressure upon Bute in the matter of the peerage.

Pitt's vanity was not likely to make him blind to the increasing dangers of his position, and in December he had impressed it upon Newcastle that whereas he was in some doubt 'if things would go on at all', nothing but a close union between the Duke and himself would make their continuance possible.¹¹¹ Such was extremely good advice—if only it had been followed. But Pitt was so little of a politician in the narrow sense that he failed to see the necessity of treating the Duke with deference ; and Newcastle, for his part, had an ear always on the alert for a chance to intrigue with the foe. It was not long afterwards that Pitt, in his dismay at the financial situation of the country, charged the Treasury with the wasteful extravagance of the war¹¹²—a move which, apart from all justice in the matter, was most impolitic in view of Newcastle's position as leader of the Whigs. The time had passed, in fact, when Pitt could reckon on his own great achievements as a safeguard against attack. The expression, 'a bloody and expensive war,' was nothing less than an insult to his policy for the last three years, and it was eminently unlikely that Bute and his party would discriminate between the profitable extravagance, so to speak, of the Secretary of State, and a possible waste of money on the part of the Treasury. On one occasion Pitt was so alarmed at his situation that he begged Newcastle

¹¹¹ Newcastle to Mansfield, December 26, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32916, f. 337.

¹¹² *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 45.

to procure for him an ‘honourable retreat’.¹¹³ To combat his sovereign’s ingratitude was something Pitt had neither the temper nor the tact to do successfully; but Newcastle may well have been astonished at this momentary display of political cowardice.¹¹⁴ The character of their alliance becomes clear. It was evident that on Newcastle alone was to rest the duty of guiding the fortunes of the Whigs.

Bute’s policy was certainly not wholly immoderate. He believed that at any time he could make Newcastle resign,¹¹⁵ if he wished it, and he expected that Pitt would retire as soon as the war was brought to an end¹¹⁶—an additional reason for desiring peace. In the meantime he was fully determined to take an active place in the Administration, as soon as the time should seem ripe.

When Bedford received the King’s permission to retire from Ireland, the Lieutenantcy was offered to Temple, who suspended his decision till he had talked it over with Pitt.¹¹⁷ On a first judgement it would appear that the offer was a friendly concession, but it must be considered that

¹¹³ Memoranda.—Conference with Mr. Pitt, February 12, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32918, f. 467.

¹¹⁴ Pitt was probably acting on impulse. But we have found him once before, in a fit of despair, importuning the Duke for a sinecure.

¹¹⁵ Doddington, *Diary*, January 2, 1761.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. : February 6, 1761.

¹¹⁷ Memoranda.—Conference with Lord Bute, February 12, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32918, f. 467.

Temple was the only peer upon whom the War Minister could rely, and to bring about his exile to Ireland was an advantage which the Court could not fail to appreciate. Pitt, for his part, was both too independent and too impolitic to approve of any favour from a man whom he detested, and he declared through Temple that he would make all his representations directly to the King, and never through the medium of a third party.¹¹⁸ He eventually refused to allow Temple to accept, probably because the latter was indispensable to him in the Upper House ;¹¹⁹ but there may well have been a certain measure of defiance behind his action.

Finally in March Bute believed the time had come for stepping to the centre of the stage ; and the reliance which Pitt had placed on his shifty ally was to show its fatal effects. Newcastle, Hardwicke and Devonshire, at the instance of Viri, consented to concur in a ‘representation’ to the King, recommending that Bute be made Secretary of State—a move which Pitt was not to hear of until afterwards, although the First Lord had many misgivings on the subject.¹²⁰

The King had long ago wished his trusted counsellor to take this step, and he was much

¹¹⁸ Secret Memoranda, February 26, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32919, f. 285.

¹¹⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 32.

¹²⁰ Secret Memoranda, March 3, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32919, f. 400.

pleased when Newcastle opened the matter to him.¹²¹ From the Earl himself one could hardly expect any remonstrance, and the day after Devonshire acquainted Pitt with the recent interview¹²² Lord Bute was appointed to succeed Holderness as Secretary of State for the North. Fox was in no wise astonished on hearing the news, but thought the step a great blunder before the assurance of peace.¹²³ His message, communicated through Fitzmaurice, was expressed with caution ; he could not wish Bute 'joy of it', but 'congratulates the public very much and wishes His Lordship all the private and particular satisfaction and success the situation can admit of'.¹²⁴ One may not be inclined entirely to agree with Fox's opinion that peace should first have been assured. It is true, Bute would then have possessed a greater measure of stability, but would he have been enabled to procure the peace in the first place ? Certainly the Seals gave the Earl much more prestige, as well as far greater control, than the mere possession of a seat in the Cabinet.

Some changes necessarily took place with this important promotion. Holderness, who had been dismissed for Bute's benefit, was consoled by a pension and retired from public life ; while

¹²¹ An account of what passed with the King, March 6, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32919, f. 485.

¹²² Secret Memoranda, March 3, 1761 : *ibid.*, f. 400. We are not informed as to the details of this interview.

¹²³ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 75.

¹²⁴ Fitzmaurice to Bute, March 1761: Fitzmaurice, I. 103.

another removal was that of Legge, the misguided Whig who had paid assiduous court to Leicester House, only to be sacrificed without compunction.¹²⁵ Halifax took Ireland, Barrington succeeded Legge, and Charles Townshend became Secretary-at-War; but none of these men were picked for their devotion to the Newcastle interest.¹²⁶ The old Duke was now practically alone in the Ministry, still clinging to power, and not even yet perceiving that the man whom he had assisted to gain a place at the expense of a Whig, would sooner or later supplant himself.

Bute was not long in possession of the Seals before he showed that he had no intention of enjoying the lot of Holderness, and he told Lord Melcombe (for by that title had Doddington's intrigues of 1758 with Leicester House¹²⁷ been rewarded) that the outgoing Secretary had not known for a period of ten days what his colleague in the Foreign Office was doing.¹²⁸ Bute resented

¹²⁵ Even Newcastle, who should have desired his continuance merely for the reason that he was a Whig, seems—passively at least—to have been a party in his destruction; though, as usual, the Duke was anxious to have others assume the responsibility.—Memoranda for Lord Bute, February 8, 1761: Add. MSS., 32918, f. 363. Fox gives an interesting account of Legge's downfall.—*Memoirs*, pp. 39–40.

¹²⁶ Fox calls Barrington ‘devoted to the Duke of Newcastle’; but his loyalty was destined to prove unequal to the test, as we shall notice later.

¹²⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 5, 1758: Add. MSS., 32884, f. 259.

¹²⁸ Doddington, *Diary*, February 6, 1761.

extremely that Galitzin, the Russian Ambassador, had transmitted some despatches to Pitt, who was not head of the department which dealt with Russia, and he declared that he would not suffer the least encroachment upon his department while he held office—no, not for two minutes. Pitt admitted that his colleague was right in the matter, and Galitzin apologized.¹²⁹

One of the new Secretary's first steps was to make strong professions of regard to Newcastle, and he took pains to assure himself that the Duke would support him, if he (Newcastle) should find it impossible to get along with Pitt.¹³⁰ The Earl's first conference with his colleague was not an equally pleasant one, but the latter submitted to what he could not prevent, although he repeated his assertion that he would carry his opinions directly to the King, and that he must have a continued share in the recommendations within his province.¹³¹ Two Secretaries of State there were now, who might be called diametrically opposed to each other in character and policy ; and the chances of their acting in unison were practically nil.

The question upon which all other issues hung was undoubtedly that of concluding a peace. In March, France on behalf of her allies had invited England and Prussia to take part in an inter-

¹²⁹ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 42.

¹³⁰ 'Substance of what passed in my conversation with Lord Bute,' March 11, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32920, f. 67.

¹³¹ Newcastle to Devonshire, March 13, 1761 : *ibid.*, f. 166.

national congress to adjust the difficulties and contrive a settlement. She also sent a separate memorial, suggesting that negotiations be opened between the two Courts on an *uti possidetis* basis, and offered to send a minister at once to England to treat for this purpose. Fox explains in his *Memoirs* that nothing could have been clearer than the wording of the proposals, but the very fact that its tone was moderate, seemed to call forth suspicions from the Ministers.¹³²

The Cabinet may have had various views on the subject, but the guiding spirit was still Pitt. Whatever may be said in justification of the great Minister's policy, there can be little doubt that at this time he did not seriously want peace. True, he may have ceased to conjure up visions of 'war until eternity',¹³³ but he was not yet convinced that he had humbled France sufficiently, and he refused to have his policy thus rudely interrupted. On the plea, therefore, of disliking the *époques*¹³⁴—that is, the dates proposed by France for a cessation of hostilities—Pitt obstructed

¹³² *Fox's Memoirs*, pp. 33–4.

¹³³ See p. 175.

¹³⁴ In Europe, May 1; in America and Africa, July 1; in the East Indies, September 1. These dates would have forced Pitt to renounce many of his great schemes, although time would have been allowed for the capture of Belle Isle. We have it on Hardwicke's authority that Pitt wanted the actual signature of the Peace as the *époque* for ending the war, urging, strangely enough (unless we understand a covert motive through it all), that this would induce France to hasten the conclusion.—Add. MSS., 32920, f. 370.

a settlement in order to launch a wasteful expedition against Belle Isle.¹³⁵ ‘To obstruct and

¹³⁵ Pitt had originally intended that this expedition should be directed against Martinique ; but the menacing attitude of Spain induced him to strike a blow much nearer home. From a purely strategical and military standpoint Pitt’s decision was quite justifiable ; but the possibility of obviating any need for such activity was a matter which clearly had no influence on his policy. Fox—after mentioning the Cabinet’s suspicious attitude toward the overtures—writes : ‘ Pitt took advantage of this and other weakness of his colleagues, and delayed and obstructed peace. . . . He drives on the vain and murtherous expedition at Belle Isle as if it was the beginning of war and of superlative consequence to this country, and talks of more expeditions. The French, irritated, renew their offer, but insist on the *époques* mentioned. This Pitt carries the refusal of against the sense of the whole Cabinet Council, every one yielding but the D. of Newcastle, Ld. Hardwicke, and the D. of Bedford.—*Fox’s Memoirs*, p. 43. This remains practically our only authority for the Cabinet’s discussion of the *époques*, especially as Newcastle wrote no letters to Hardwicke on the subject. Such a discussion, however, must certainly have taken place, and a letter from Bedford gives some hint of the disagreement. ‘It has grieved me very much,’ wrote the latter in May, ‘(and the more I consider it, the more I am confirmed in my opinion) that the first offer made by M. de Choiseul to Mr. Pitt, with the several *époques* therein mentioned, and the immediate mission of a French minister here, was not accepted *simply*, and the passports sent over for his coming, especially as by that France, who did not then demand a reciprocity of the immediate sending over an English minister to Paris, would have made the first step, and an humiliating one it would have been, towards Mr. Pitt. The objections made by Mr. Pitt to the proposed *époques* did not at that time weigh at all with me, and the more fully this point comes to be discussed, the clearer will it, I think, appear, that these *époques* were not unfavourable ones to this country.’—Bedford to Newcastle, May 9, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32922, f. 449.

delay a peace,' writes Fox, 'that he must approve of at the expense of thousands of lives and the misery of thousands of families—what must the man be, or can he be a man, who will allow this to his vanity and passion ? '¹³⁶

There are, indeed, some grounds for a charge of inhumanity.¹³⁷ The world in general and unbiassed statesmen in particular were now ready for peace, and the Court of Versailles were in straits to which the distress of Great Britain in 1748 cannot be compared. Already the Court of Madrid was feeling for a chance to come into the war, and, unless Pitt would accept the reasonable basis we have noticed, the Duc de Choiseul (since 1758 the guide of French policy) would have no other choice than to seek this resource as a means of preventing the ruin of his country. On the other side the British nation had won what it had gone to war to obtain, namely the control of the disputed territory in America, and the financial prosperity which the economy of Walpole and Pelham had contributed so much to secure was in danger of being thoroughly undone by the ever-increasing load of national debt. It was hardly strange that the national spirit was beginning to turn against the war ;¹³⁸ and nothing, in fact, but unabated success

The *pièces diplomatiques* will be found in the appendix to Thackeray's *Chatham*.¹³⁶ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 46.

¹³⁷ Dr. von Ruville expresses the case clearly when he writes, 'Pitt declined the moral obligation to concession.'—*William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, II. 365.

¹³⁸ See Corbett, *England in the Seven Years' War*, II. 144.

would be likely to prevent it from going to violent lengths. That Pitt saw very deeply may reasonably be doubted, but he knew the force of success, and he valued it as a weapon.¹³⁹ With a confidence that never wavered he accordingly declined to accept the *époques* or the concessions, determined to await the results of the expeditions he had planned, and insistent that the French should be entirely excluded from the North American fisheries.¹⁴⁰ It was in virtue of these contentions that the overtures of Choiseul met with undeserved failure. Had it not been for Pitt and his dominance in the Cabinet, the situation was such that diplomacy would have had every chance of winning a great victory; and there is some reason for believing that an armistice,¹⁴¹ concluded on the basis

¹³⁹ Pitt knew how to manipulate public spirit in the same way that Napoleon did later, and he was equally inattentive to the interests of the people considered as individuals. Such a habit in a war minister was only natural. Both he and the great Frenchman regarded people only collectively as nations, and the ruin of a nation meant a victory in strategy—a particularly clever move in the most brilliant and terrible of all games. Such men are, of course, the least likely to give weight to the signs of a revulsion in popular sentiment.

¹⁴⁰ Hardwicke writes of the fisheries as the ‘point on which he (Pitt) had much set his heart’.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, April 6, 1761.

¹⁴¹ This was, in fact, proposed by that shrewd statesman, the Duke of Bedford. Pitt’s reply (according to Fox, who probably gained his information from Bedford) was that he ‘would never grant such a boon to France’, and then ‘talked of expedition on expedition, and of the future as the only means of making an honourable peace.’—*Fox’s Memoirs*, pp. 43–4.

proposed by France, would have gained peace without obstruction, and perhaps avoided both the war with Spain and Pitt's own downfall. It was not done, however, and the chance of securing a thoroughly satisfactory settlement was never again discovered.

The subject of this work would not justify a lengthy treatment of the negotiations which proceeded in the summer and autumn of 1761. One of the great difficulties from the very beginning was the lack of a sound and strong middle party. Bute essayed to play the part, sometimes siding with Pitt and sometimes with the Opposition in the Cabinet, headed by Newcastle ; but in whatever way one may look at the Junior Secretary, he never gives the appearance of real sincerity ; he was simply playing a cautious political rôle, while at heart more radical—that is, more violently in favour of peace—than any of his colleagues. The worst feature of such a policy was the effect it had upon that Opposition. With every reason to believe that he was on their side, his persistent trimming only puzzled and disconcerted them ; and hence the man of whom they all felt a certain dread was able easily to override them, and yet without perfect liberty to act himself. It looks, indeed, very much as though this consummate intriguer was seeking deliberately to discredit one party in the Cabinet,¹⁴² while he effectually hampered—

¹⁴² Newcastle had written, in one of his paroxysms of despair, that he could bear his treatment no longer, and must ask for leave to resign. ‘And when that is done,’ he continued, ‘if

and had a good chance of ruining—the other. If that was his policy, he certainly succeeded, but at the immediate expense of the peace.

There is one fact, however, which seems to stand out clear in the negotiations which followed the expedition to Belle Isle, and that was that Pitt—and Pitt alone—had the shrewdness to penetrate the French and Spanish designs. That Spain was eager for an occasion to enter the war had been only too evident from the trend of Spanish policy ; and Pitt must certainly have seen that, having checkmated Choiseul when the latter was sincere, he had deliberately driven him, of necessity, into the arms of the willing ally. Therefore, since the Cabinet had now committed itself to negotiations with France, the most that he could do was to render them so difficult that his enemy's duplicity would be speedily unmasked. It was for this reason, no doubt, that he had endeavoured to persuade the Cabinet to pronounce the Government's terms to be quite unalterable—a reply which would thus include his contention regarding the fisheries.¹⁴³ True, he could hardly

Lord Waldegrave and Mr. F. are agreeable to the King, and he thinks they can serve him better, I humbly beg and advise His Majesty would take them.'—Memorandum, April 1761 : Add. MSS., 32922, f. 282. Newcastle had evidently not yet grasped the fundamental policy of his enemies. The good Whig, Lord Waldegrave, would have been little more acceptable than Newcastle himself, and even Fox was still to be regarded as a member of the same party.

¹⁴³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, April 17, 1761 : Add. MSS.,

have believed that France would accept a situation which would practically seal her ruin as a maritime power; but at any rate he might succeed in upsetting the negotiation, and was confident that his object could in the end be obtained by force. Unfortunately for his purpose it was just this problem of the fisheries which proved the Cabinet's stumbling-block. 'All the rest of Europe,' said Hardwicke, 'would be against our engrossing such a monopoly.'¹⁴⁴ Yet little did their views avail them towards any definite conclusion; for Pitt could always bully them even when thwarted in his own designs. As a consequence the Government's policy still remained at its usual deadlock.

One is tempted to feel, as has been intimated, that Bute was determined to strike both his enemies, and postpone the formation of a definite policy until he should see before him a clean slate. In August he treated with extreme coldness one of Newcastle's threats of resignation,¹⁴⁵ and in the

32922, f. 15. In a meeting of the Cabinet in June, at which the question of the fisheries was discussed, Pitt wished to make this concession a *sine qua non* for the continuance of the negotiation.—Newcastle to Devonshire, June 28, 1761.

¹⁴⁴ Hardwicke to Newcastle, April 6, 1761: Add. MSS., 32921, f. 340. Newcastle, languid in everything but reasoning, expressed his belief that France, if totally excluded from the American fisheries, would 'enter into measures with Spain and Vienna'.—Considerations relating to France, July 20, 1761: Add. MSS., 32925, f. 195.

¹⁴⁵ 'He admitted,' wrote the Duke, 'that my going out

meantime his conduct indirectly forced Devonshire and Bedford out of the Cabinet—the former refusing to put up with Pitt's rigorous coercion, and the latter (who had been the War Minister's most spirited adversary) becoming convinced that Bute would not support the Opposition. Yet the success of the new Secretary was by no means assured until a question arose which created divergence upon the fundamental policy to be pursued. In July, Choiseul had permitted the demands of Spain to be appended to one of his own *mémoires*—a fact which not only roused Pitt's indignation but seriously complicated the whole situation. The majority in the Cabinet—now led by Bute—were as much as ever the disciples of moderation, and although they supported Pitt in matters of detail, both now and later, they refused to believe that the Franco-Spanish *rapprochement* portended a hostile alliance, and that France was determined to force the peace which England had been so loth to give her. When at last they were compelled to see the situation as it was, they took up the ground, with reference to Spain, that an intercepted letter was not enough to constitute a proper *casus belli*. Doubtless on a high basis of international morals they were right, and set a most unusual example. But from the point of view of

may have bad consequences and create difficulties ; but that, if it was to be so, the King *must be supported, and should be supported.*'—Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 17, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32927, f. 68.

strategy it is almost beyond dispute that Pitt's policy was the only correct one to pursue, and, having suffered him to obstruct peace in the spring, they should have been consistent enough to stand with him now in the alternative. Yet it must be admitted that Pitt's habitual arrogance at meetings ('insolence', Bute termed it¹⁴⁶) and the not unreasonable suspicion that he would make his despatches to the two powers wear a distinctly polemic character,¹⁴⁷ had something to do with his colleagues' unwillingness to trust him. They knew that save on his own terms he would never consent to make peace.

On the 18th of September Pitt introduced a paper, signed by himself and Temple, urging strongly that Lord Bristol,¹⁴⁸ the Ambassador at

¹⁴⁶ Newcastle to Devonshire, June 28, 1761. The Cabinet naturally resented the frequency with which he spoke of himself as 'guide' and also his habit of employing the first person when he talked of the war or the Government's policy. The oft-quoted remarks of Lord Granville at the Cabinet meeting, which Pitt attended, show clearly how difficult his colleagues found it to work with him. An admirable analysis of the constitutional aspects of the situation is given by Mr. Corbett in his *England in the Seven Years' War*, II. 205.

¹⁴⁷ This is traceable throughout the Newcastle correspondence of these months. The Cabinet knew that Pitt was so determined to be aggressive that it was loth to have him take any step without its sanction. In September we find Hardwicke opposing his sending of a *mémoire* to Spain on the ground that it would certainly be 'inflammatory'.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 22, 1761: Add. MSS., 32928, f. 320.

¹⁴⁸ The successor to Ambassador Keene, who had died December 15, 1757.

Madrid, be instructed to depart without taking leave. The paper was not approved by the King, and its proposal was discountenanced by the rest of the Cabinet, who replaced it by a more moderate plan. Two weeks later, on the basis of the information at hand, Pitt tried in vain to persuade his colleagues to declare war upon Spain in order to intercept the treasure-fleet returning from the Indies ; and, being again outvoted, both he and his 'shadow' (as Fox calls Temple) tendered their resignations. A few days later the King tried to atone for his ingratitude by making Pitt a handsome offer ; the latter was not satisfied, however, and having hinted his preferences, was awarded a pension of £3,000 a year and a peerage for his wife. When this act, considered by so many as unworthy of his claims of disinterested patriotism, became known to the populace, the temporary revulsion of feeling was so strong that Pitt felt himself called upon to write a letter of explanation, though both the effort and its motive were scarcely becoming to his dignity. More unfortunate still, he rode through the streets in a most ostentatious fashion on one occasion when the King was to dine with the Lord Mayor, and the ovation which the ex-Minister called forth from the people was, by contrast with the reception of the Sovereign, hardly less than an affront to the latter. Such are instances of Pitt's fondness for courting public opinion, a mention of which is made here in virtue of the antithesis presented by the character of his

former rival, who regarded these scenes with unmeasured scorn.¹⁴⁹ Yet the conduct of the latter is scarcely more to be condemned. Honest in his dishonesty, Fox made no pretence of being purer than his fellows ; but his services were never of such a nature as to tempt him—had he desired—to scramble for the gratitude of the nation he had served. At least we can say that Pitt honoured the English people when he thought of them as a nation ; while Fox, on the other hand, who despised the populace as rabble, and did not look beyond the circumference of his little social and political world, caught never the slightest gleam of patriotism.

Meanwhile the diplomatic horizon grew steadily blacker, and the war with Spain, which Fox said could have been parried and of which he even now disapproved,¹⁵⁰ broke out in all its fury. It is only necessary to add here that the splendid system which Pitt's genius had constructed was amply able to stand the test after his retirement, and the Court which had foolishly waited till England was strong again, was now humbled even as France had been.

Fox had been a quiet spectator of all these

¹⁴⁹ *Fox's Memoirs*, pp. 53–4.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57. As Fox was not a member of the Cabinet, his opinion can hardly possess much weight. His feelings on the subject may have been instigated by dislike of Pitt, who, he knew, had made no effort to conciliate Spain. Doubtless Bedford was his informant regarding the transactions of the Cabinet.

momentous events. He was sincerely desirous of peace and deplored that it had not been made in the spring.¹⁵¹ The more he had believed that Bute was 'bullied' (to use his own expression), the more bitter he seemed to feel towards the man who had dominated the Cabinet and prevented peace. At all events the past gave Fox just grounds for detesting Pitt, and if he now contemplated their relative positions, so different from the days when he himself had been the favoured one, and victor in many a skirmish in the Commons, the Paymaster would not have been human had he not felt some measure of envy for the prowess of a rival whose temperament was hardly more active than his own. Pitt had taken the same office, which he himself had held under Newcastle, and instead of being outvoted and overruled, he had secured and long maintained an ascendancy over all his colleagues. In the summer of 1761 Pitt had certainly the upper hand. Fox did not then perceive that his old rival was clinging to a spar that would soon sink out of sight, while he himself would rise once more to the surface.

The scheme of winning a crown for Lady Sarah having utterly failed, Fox was wholly indifferent as to whether his sister-in-law accepted the invitation to become a bridesmaid at the royal wedding ; while Lady Caroline, on the other hand, was much more indignant at the King's behaviour and would

¹⁵¹ Fox to Ilchester, July 14, 1761 : *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 108.

have had her sister refuse.¹⁵² Lady Sarah, having considered both aspects of the case, decided to accept the invitation, and Fox told her jokingly that the King would ‘ behold her pretty face and repent ’.¹⁵³ Whether he did so or not, History will never tell.

The idea of a peerage for Lady Caroline was never long absent from Fox’s thoughts, and he was too impatient by nature to bear the delay with composure. In September he wrote to Fitzmaurice (now Earl of Shelburne¹⁵⁴) that he began to wonder whether Bute meant to keep faith with him, and after declaring that he (Fox) could not have been in any way to blame, he put his interests in Shelburne’s hands.¹⁵⁵ The matter apparently languished for some time, but on the night of the coronation, Cumberland sent for him, announced Pitt’s intended resignation, and said that he had been consulted with reference to Fox’s ‘ intentions

¹⁵² Lady Sarah Lennox to Lady Susan Fox-Strangways, August 1761 : *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 94.

¹⁵³ Captain Napier’s Memoir, *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 94.

¹⁵⁴ The late Lord Shelburne had received an English barony (in addition to his Irish peerage) in 1760 (Lodge, *Peerage of Ireland*, II. 360), apparently in fulfilment of a promise made by the King to Fox (Newcastle to the King, March 22, 1760 : Add. MSS., 32903). Fox seems to have been an old friend of the family, especially of the late Lord Shelburne’s uncle (see *Works of Jeremy Bentham*, X. 101), who left Lady Caroline a legacy of £5,000.—Walpole to Mann, April 22, 1751 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 45.

¹⁵⁵ Fox to Shelburne, September 3, and 5, 1761: Fitzmaurice, I. 107.

in the House of Commons' ; that he had answered that he doubted if Fox would assume a responsible rôle, and the latter must have his peerage immediately. For this Fox expressed his gratitude.

A few days later Pitt's resignation became known, and shortly afterwards, in a colloquy with Bute, Fox casually brought up the subject that was uppermost in his mind. The notion, however, seemed to fill Bute with concern, and he feared that it would be said 'Pitt forced a peerage last week, and this week Fox forces another' ; but he comforted Fox by telling him that he might safely make the promise public.¹⁵⁶

Shelburne had, meanwhile, been pondering the situation, and he suggested to Bute that Fox might after all be willing to take an active part in the House of Commons.¹⁵⁷ In fact the King's first Ministry had won such considerable unpopularity that even their most trifling measures might meet with failure, especially now that Pitt was no longer a factor in the Administration. But the Pay-

¹⁵⁶ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 59.

¹⁵⁷ Shelburne to Bute, October 6, 1761 : Fitzmaurice, I. 108. Bute had at first been very uncertain as to the advisability of giving Fox a responsible rôle in the House of Commons. He had told Newcastle during the last week of September that 'the going from the most popular man to the most unpopular man in England would give such an advantage to Mr. Pitt as to put it out of Mr. Fox's power to be of any service on this occasion.' A few days later Bute met Devonshire and declared that 'the scheme about Mr. Fox would not do'.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 26, 1761 : *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, XXI. 128.

master thought the suggestion, under the circumstances, unfair. Lady Hester Pitt had been given a peerage, he said, and George Grenville been placed over his head; ¹⁵⁸ he scouted this ‘half-Opposition’, ¹⁵⁹ as he called the proposal of Shelburne, and assured him that he would never consent to it unless he were to ‘resign and oppose thoroughly’, and that he had no desire to do. ¹⁶⁰ A few days later he became more insistent, and assured Shelburne that he never thought to obtain the peerage by reliance upon Cumberland alone, but that the Duke desired a settlement of the question and had fixed a date for the answer; in conclusion he requested a half-hour appointment with the Earl. ¹⁶¹

Such men as Cumberland and Fox were too prominent for Bute, in his precarious situation, to disoblige. He would have had Grenville take the ‘lead’ in the Commons and argued that he wished to avoid resorting to Fox; but the Treasurer of the Navy, who was just then ambitious to become

¹⁵⁸ Grenville had been made a member of the Cabinet in January, but it can hardly be supposed that Fox envied him. The point which he was making was that nothing had been given him to induce him to take the trouble of serving the Ministry.

¹⁵⁹ Opposition to Newcastle while himself retaining a place in the Ministry. But this was a mere pretext. Fox was unwilling to commit himself until he should receive satisfaction on the peerage question.

¹⁶⁰ Fox to Shelburne, October 11, 1761: Fitzmaurice, I. 110.

¹⁶¹ Memorandum by Fox (sent to Shelburne), *ibid.*, I. 115.

Speaker, not only refused to act in any capacity with Fox¹⁶² (who, he complained to Newcastle, had greater parliamentary talents and party-strength¹⁶³) but was even anxious to state his objections to the King ;¹⁶⁴ Newcastle (for a different reason, of course) had likewise cautioned Bute against enlisting Fox,¹⁶⁵ but the Earl was by no means sure that he would not have to resort to the unpopular Paymaster, and hence he begged Grenville not to mention Fox to the King, who disliked him intensely ;¹⁶⁶ thus was averted what might have been a grievous blunder. If it was actually true that the King hated Fox, he must have been influenced by his mother, but it is not improbable that Grenville somewhat exaggerated the case in his narrative of these events. It is extremely unlikely that Bute, for his part, had any personal affection for Fox, but, being a born intriguer, he saw the necessity of gaining his support and was desirous of doing so, as far as possible, without committing himself. When he found, however, that Fox was not a man to engage himself on the strength of plausible professions, he held a conference with the latter and satisfied him entirely that the peerage should be forthcoming

¹⁶² Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 415.

¹⁶³ Newcastle to Devonshire, October 31, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32930, f. 220.

¹⁶⁴ Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 415.

¹⁶⁵ Newcastle to Devonshire, October 14, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32929, f. 252.

¹⁶⁶ Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 415.

before the end of the next session.¹⁶⁷ Fox, for his part, was not disposed to jeopardize his dearest wish by a refusal and he had furthermore an inclination (as he later intimated to Newcastle) to give Pitt an uncomfortable time in Parliament whenever it were possible ;¹⁶⁸ and so for these two reasons the Paymaster accepted the proposition and agreed to give intelligent support to the Administration.¹⁶⁹

It is a curious situation—to say the least of it—that Fox is now about to give aid not only to an element in politics to which his attachment to Cumberland had made him bitterly hostile, but also to an organization that was gradually overthrowing the great party to which he nominally belonged. Yet if we consider the circumstances, can we call Fox exactly disloyal ? He had no respect for Newcastle and Hardwicke ; Pitt he could not regard as one of the champions of Whiggism ; and Devonshire had once betrayed him for a peaceful settlement. He was now determined to secure a title for the woman who had

¹⁶⁷ Fox to Shelburne, October 1761 : Fitzmaurice, I. 116.

¹⁶⁸ Newcastle to Devonshire, October 31, 1761.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Mr. Fox,’ wrote Shelburne to Bute, ‘will attend every day, and will, either by silence or by speaking, as he finds it prudent according to the occasion, do his best to forward what Your Lordship wishes, *and will enter into no sort of engagement with any one else whatever*. He will endeavour likewise to see Your Lordship once a week. The rest depends upon yourself, and I trust will not be neglected.—Shelburne to Bute, October 31, 1761 : Fitzmaurice, I. 116.

eloped with him at a time when he was merely a promising member of the Commons in possession of one of the lesser offices of the Pelham Ministry. When we add to this fact his outspoken desire for peace—which Pitt had not the desire nor Newcastle the capacity to procure—it is perhaps not so strange that the great Whig debater should agree to support a Tory Administration.

Thus after more than four years of comfortable inaction, Fox emerges upon the scene, the ‘King’s friend’. The great rôle that he will play in the coming drama—one which he does not yet foresee—remains to be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X

THE ‘KING’S FRIEND’

WITH Pitt out of office, Bute had a freer hand to support the King’s peace-policy and concentrate all power in himself. Yet for a moment he seemed uncertain whether to continue the prescribed programme after all, and was actually meditating an effort to outstrip Pitt in military glory, when Fox came to him and earnestly impressed upon him the necessity for peace.¹ Such wavering, due to personal motives, shows perhaps more clearly than any other instance how little of the patriot there really was in Bute’s character. Fortunately for himself, he soon reverted to the shrewder method of a campaign against the Whigs, already inaugurated by his signal victory over the great War Minister.

The twelfth Parliament of Great Britain had been elected in the spring of 1761, and Fox this time represented Dunwich² in Suffolk, whether because he feared a renewal of hostility in Windsor does not appear. The elections had probably been superintended by Grenville, with Bute as final supervisor; and their persistent and successful efforts to

¹ *Fox’s Memoirs*, p. 59.

² A borough the greater part of which lay beneath the waves of the North Sea.

exclude the Duke of Newcastle at least from an important share in the canvassing had undoubtedly the effect of diminishing the great power which he had long held over members by force of obligation. It is accordingly probable that this change was no small factor in the creation of new sympathies in the coming Parliament. One must note, however, that bribery was even more rampant than it had been in 1754, and nothing pointed to a betterment of conditions now that the 'King's Friends' instead of the Whigs were to govern the State.

The man naturally designated for the management of the Commons was George Grenville. Though a tedious and unimpressive speaker, and at the same time far from popular in the House,³ Grenville held, nevertheless, an enviable reputation for business ability, and his knowledge of technicalities and detail were an immediate result of his natural industry. As far as politics were concerned, Grenville had every reason to connect himself with Bute. Besides his ancient allegiance to the party of Leicester House, he was no longer bound by feelings of loyalty to Pitt,⁴ and he had opposed both Pitt and Temple in the dispute which had led to their resignations. Nevertheless, when Bute offered him the Seals (together with the management of the Commons) Grenville showed

³ Melcombe to Bute, October 8, 1761 : Adolphus, *History of England*, 1760-87, app.

⁴ It will be remembered that Pitt sacrificed Grenville in 1757, and it was not until the new reign that the latter had even been admitted to the Cabinet.

himself unwilling to step immediately into his brother-in-law's place,⁵ and preferred to gratify his desire for advancement by succeeding Anson at the Admiralty.⁶ Meanwhile, at Grenville's instance, the Seals were conferred upon his brother-in-law, Lord Egremont.

At the end of October, after long and persistent refusals, Grenville consented at last to undertake the management of the Commons ;⁷ but he made it a condition that Fox who was 'ready to assist him and do anything, should do nothing at all'.⁸ 'He was jealous,' wrote Newcastle to Rockingham, 'lest Fox's superior abilities should eclipse him.'⁹ Meanwhile assurances from Bute had gained the point for the present, and Fox was unlikely to be sensitive about his own part in the Ministry's programme.¹⁰

The new Parliament opened on the 3rd of November, and, Grenville having been dissuaded from claiming the honour he most coveted, a venerable Tory, Sir John Cust, was elected Speaker

⁵ Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 411.

⁶ Anson had been obliged to retire through ill-health, and he died June 6, 1762.

⁷ Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 415.

⁸ Newcastle to Devonshire, October 31, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32930, f. 220.

⁹ Newcastle to Rockingham, November 3, 1761 : *ibid.*, f. 299.

¹⁰ 'Mr. Fox will be very easy about it,' said Bute, knowing well that this new recruit had ceased to be ambitious for place or power.—Newcastle to Devonshire, October 31, 1761 : *ibid.*, f. 220.

of the Commons to succeed Onslow, now entering the honourable retirement which his long tenure of the post had unquestionably merited. Debates on matters relating to the war occupied most of the House's attention during the first session, but nothing took place of startling importance until the notorious *début* of Colonel Isaac Barré as a Parliamentary orator. Barré had been recently brought into Parliament by Shelburne and was apparently under the patronage of Fox for a reason which will soon appear. He had served with distinction under Wolfe in Canada, but having lost his chief and being without influence or money, he was unable to obtain the promotion he merited, and Pitt for some reason refused his application.¹¹ He was now smarting under the consciousness of his ill-treatment, and eager for revenge against the man who had slighted him ; while Fox, on his side, was not slow to grasp the opportunity of encouraging the veteran's design.

The speech which Barré made on the 9th of December was certainly an unusual exhibition of oratorical fire, although it somewhat passed the bounds of justice and decorum. After condemning the measures of the preceding reign, he disclosed with unsparing oratory the numerous inconsistencies of Pitt's career, called him a 'dangerous, profligate and abandoned minister' who supported what he had before opposed, and 'like a *caméléon*

¹¹ Barré had then declared with sarcasm that he was ' bound in the highest gratitude '.—Fitzmaurice, I. 119.

(sic), turned to the colour of the ground he stood on.' 'There were many personal speeches against Mr. Pitt,' wrote Newcastle afterwards, 'but none to compare with this Colonel Barry's (sic).'¹²

The feelings of Pitt who was present can only be imagined. 'He seemed dejected,' writes Fox, 'tried to stop Mr. Barré by calling him to order, could not, and made no reply.' But not yet was there an end to the torture of the fallen Minister; George Selwyn, a friend of Fox, and the most celebrated wit of the time, rose and described the remarks of Pitt (which had preceded Barré's) as 'his dying speech and confession', and then pointing first to Barré and afterward to Pitt, he exclaimed, 'There is *Gladiator pugnans*, and there is *Gladiator moriens*.'

Repellent as the speech of Barré was, and bitterly ungrateful in its treatment of the man who had raised England to pinnacles of glory, there was nevertheless an element of truth beneath it all, and Fox's satisfaction was undisguised. 'Profligate and abandoned in his political life' (he writes), 'he certainly has been. Inconsistent too, and giving up his most solemn assurance to every gust of ambition as the same gentleman accused him of will be allowed.'¹³ Such a judgement must, of course, be open to qualification,¹⁴ but

¹² Newcastle to Devonshire, December 9, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32932, f. 78. ¹³ *Fox's Memoirs*, pp. 55-7.

¹⁴ Pitt can hardly be said to have been swayed by 'gusts' of ambition. The determination to gain power had never

some censure upon Pitt's politics in the past was not unmerited.

The following day, when Barré continued his invectives, Pitt tried again to call him to order, declaring that 'no word guilty of so foul a crime as want of confidence in the King had fallen from him'. But at this juncture Fox saw too good an opening for his own skill in argument to let Barré proceed, and—with much satisfaction no doubt—protested that the King's name should never be mentioned in a debate; that the House had listened with pleasure while justice was done to His Majesty's virtue; that Colonel Barré had a right to show whither he thought Mr. Pitt's arguments tended; and that he chose to give Barré the hint because he seemed so able and willing to make use of his right.¹⁵ Pitt then ventured an explanation and Fox replied; it was a skirmish that recalled the days gone by, when the two giants confronted each other before an eager and listening House, and fought with their respective weapons—eloquence and argument—over the measures of the Newcastle Ministry.

faltering, and occasional periods of peaceful loyalty had always some basis of hope as their motive.

¹⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 99. The First Lord, who had received a full account of the episode, had too sensitive a temperament to let Pitt claim all of the abuse delivered, but he tried to find consolation by persuading himself that Barré's tirade against 'ministers who preferred Hanover to America' was levelled against Fox rather than himself.—Newcastle to Devonshire, December 9, 1761.

But such a combat was never again to recur, and no longer could Fox or Pitt be known as rivals for power or fame.

Meanwhile steadily and surely Bute was dismantling the Newcastle stronghold. Not only had the Duke become a cipher in the Cabinet, but employments were still distributed without reference to his opinion.¹⁶ Finally when it was suggested that Hardwicke be given the Privy Seal to succeed Temple, Bute replied in substance that Hardwicke had received sufficient reward by the emoluments given in the past to his sons—a decision which Newcastle lost no time in communicating to his friends.¹⁷ It is odd to find that a short time afterwards Hardwicke was willing to show sufficient interest in the Bute ascendancy to mention Fox as one to be counted upon for support in the Commons.¹⁸ These veteran politicians detested the *novus homo* who was gradually undermining them, and yet they were as far from uniting with intent to crush him, as they were from giving him hearty support.¹⁹

¹⁶ Newcastle to Devonshire, October 31, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32932, f. 220.

¹⁷ Newcastle to Devonshire, October 9, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32929, f. 139.

¹⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 17, 1761 : *ibid.*, f. 332.

¹⁹ Thus Newcastle begged Hardwicke to impress upon Bute the necessity of ‘making *cause commune*’, as he expressed it, and added that this was essential to Bute’s ‘honour and security’.—Newcastle to Devonshire, October 22, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32929, f. 437.

Fox himself was certainly not overburdened with the difficulties of the disjointed Administration, and it was of small consequence to him that his former colleague might be sacrificed to the Crown's new creed. Speaking of the German question one day to Walpole, he remarked, 'The Duke of Devonshire says it is a Tory measure to abandon the Continent : for my part I do not know who are Whigs,'²⁰ and, since at that time Mansfield and Bedford had parted with the Newcastles, there was no little basis for such a comment. All Fox cared for, as we have frequently had cause to observe, was the peerage for Lady Caroline, and of securing this he no longer had a doubt. The Duke of Cumberland, however, was of too impatient a nature to cultivate hopefulness by slow degrees, and dissatisfaction with Bute on this account was one of the contributing causes of his estrangement from the Court and his consequent leaning towards Newcastle.²¹ The peerage was eventually

²⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 123.

²¹ In addition to the evidence which Fox gives we have a letter of Newcastle's in which the latter writes : 'He (Cumberland) seemed not quite pleased with My Lord Bute and particularly for having deferred Lady Caroline Fox's peerage for two months, which the Duke thought ought to have been done immediately.'—The Duke, according to Newcastle, showed an earnest desire to support him, and believed that his own services were indispensable to the First Lord.—Newcastle to Devonshire, October 31, 1761. Fox mentions the negligence in the matter of the peerage as one of the gravest mistakes which Bute made. 'It might have been a great and lasting obligation,' he writes, 'and cost him nothing.'—*Fox's Memoirs*, p. 75.

granted May 6, 1762, and Lady Caroline became ‘Baroness Holland in the County of Lincoln, and Foxley in the County of Wilts’. For five months thereafter one may consider Fox without an ambitious thought.

Parallel with the gradual diminution of the Newcastle power, was the determined policy of Bute and his lieutenants to shake themselves free of the alliance with Prussia, and in that way to hasten the conclusion of peace. Judged from results such a policy was short-sighted and disastrous. But one cannot overlook the fact that the Court party had some grounds for its action ; and even Pitt, while he was in office, had hinted that help would be withdrawn, if Frederick did not make some concessions.²² In England—speaking in a general way—the time for peace had certainly come. The public debt was enormous, as has been said, and the war with Spain, while certain in its ultimate results, was an additional burden on the finances of the country. But more important than any other factor was the delay which the engagements with Prussia would entail upon the settlement of peace.

It is fairly evident that Frederick, whether victorious or suffering disaster, was by no means willing at present that the war should be brought to a close ; and to the English Ministry it seemed that their continual pressure resulted only in campaign after campaign. As early as November

²² See von Ruville, II. 393.

Bute had given him a distinct indication of his intentions ;²³ and when in January the important fortress of Schweidnitz was captured by the Austrians, fearful lest the end should be still further off than ever, Bute instructed Ambassador Mitchell to represent at Berlin the necessity for an 'accommodation'.²⁴ In the meantime he decided to renew the subsidy only on condition that it should be used for the furtherance of peace —a rather clever device, since it broke his ally's fall, so to speak, while at the same time preparing justification of the policy.

In all this Bute was proceeding with his usual caution or—as some will allege—timidity. It should be noted that in the middle of January word reached England that the Czarina was dead, and it was more than probable that her successor, Peter III, would alter her policy.

But united as the Court party was on the general drift of its policy, there were the same degrees of difference as had existed in the opposition to Pitt during the French negotiations of the previous summer. Bedford, always too violent in his views to brook delay, had determined as early as December to move in the Lords the withdrawal of the British

²³ By intimating that he would no longer be bound by that feature of the Anglo-Prussian offensive alliance of 1758, whereby neither party should make a separate peace without the other.—See von Ruville, III. 35 (from the Prussian Ambassador's reports).

²⁴ Bute to Mitchell, January 8, 1762: Add. MSS., 32933, f. 106.

troops from Germany, while Rigby, with his published approval, should make a similar motion in the Commons.²⁵ The former intention was not carried out till February, and then failed signally, because Bute himself opposed it.²⁶ The fact was, Bedford had not the sympathy of the bulk of the Court party, and when Bute had made the shrewd political stroke of giving the Privy Seal to this veteran Whig, he failed to realize that Bedford was not the sort of man to join an Administration at the expense of his independence.

The results of such a misunderstanding were at first extremely unpleasant ; Shelburne, for example, was greatly annoyed at Bute,²⁷ and the enemies of the Court party rejoiced at a sign of disunion.²⁸ Meanwhile Charles Bunbury, the future husband of Lady Sarah Lennox, was expected to make the motion in the Commons instead of Rigby, who was perhaps dissatisfied at his failure to become Cofferer.²⁹ But Fox, who seems to have agreed with Bedford's views,³⁰ was too politic to be blind to their present folly ; and with the assistance,

²⁵ Newcastle to Devonshire, December 18, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32932, f. 235.

²⁶ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 60.

²⁷ Memorandum by Shelburne, Fitzmaurice, I. 129.

²⁸ Fox to Shelburne, February 13, 1762 : *ibid.*

²⁹ Newcastle to Devonshire, December 9, 1761. The place had been given (after James Grenville's resignation following Pitt's) by agreement to Grenville's brother-in-law, Lord Thomond.

³⁰ As we may judge from Fox's letter to Shelburne, February 4, 1762.

it was said, of Lady Sarah,³¹ he dissuaded Bunbury from making the motion.³²

Frederick treated Bute’s letter with haughty silence, while the Earl, on his side, had all the natural sensitiveness of a man new to power, and the delay increased his indignation.³³ On the 26th of February he again wrote urging peace,³⁴ and Frederick deigned to reply about a fortnight later with the declaration that war could not be terminated till the Empress Queen should be put in fear for her own territories.³⁵ Shortly afterwards came the report of a treaty of alliance between Russia and Prussia, guaranteeing Silesia and menacing Denmark—an event which not only showed the English Ministers that Frederick was no longer in danger, but convinced them that the subsidy was designed on his part for a new war and a series of conquests. It was also daily expected that Sweden would follow Russia’s example and make peace.³⁶

Thus the feelings of most of the Cabinet may be

³¹ Newcastle to Bute, February 14, 1761 : Add. MSS., 32934, f. 329.

³² Fox composed the following rhyme on his achievement :

‘A cock-match at Westminster lately was made ;
A cock-pit was crowded, great wagers were laid ;
The people, impatient, heard at last that the Fox
Had stole over night both the beautiful cocks.’

³³ He wrote Newcastle indignantly that Frederick’s last letter ‘breathed nothing but war’.—Add. MSS., 32935, f. 9.

³⁴ Bute to Knyphausen and Michel, February 26, 1762 : Adolphus, *History of England*, 1760–87, I. 555.

³⁵ King of Prussia to George III, March 12, 1762 : ibid. I. 587. ³⁶ Ibid. I. 80.

considered fairly clear. They believed that the report respecting Denmark was true, and even Newcastle—supposed to be the leading champion of the Prussian alliance—had counselled the desertion of Frederick in January.³⁷ Yet, if we are to grant that Bute's policy (more cautious than Bedford's) was in general the correct one, the virtual repudiation of England's engagements with Prussia could hardly have failed to infuriate Frederick ; and the latter did not scruple to accuse Bute (through Andrew Mitchell) of intriguing to 'traverse his negotiations '³⁸ at St. Petersburg. Such charges appear to be entirely unjust.³⁹

The complete reversion of the policy of Russia was in itself sufficient, the Court party believed, to justify the decisive step which it had long meditated. Yet if the Cabinet were to justify itself before the nation, it must be more in unison in this as well as in other matters.

³⁷ 'I would let the King of Prussia know forthwith that the situation of the country is such that they can no longer effectually support him in preserving to him all his possessions before the war ; that his own misfortunes have brought upon him a necessity of making very considerable concessions, and the only question is whether he must be entirely left, or the best composition made for him that his own situation and circumstances can procure.'—Newcastle to Yorke, January 8, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32933, f. 112.

³⁸ Foreign entry-books, No. 54, F. O. papers, Pub. Rec. Off.

³⁹ Mr. Corbett has shown in his *England in the Seven Years' War*, Vol. II, chap. xii, that Bute's diplomacy both with Russia and Austria was open to misinterpretation by virtue of his bungling methods.

Bedford's attitude we have noticed ; Mansfield was strongly opposed to continuing the subsidy since the treaty with Russia;⁴⁰ while Devonshire, Hardwicke and Newcastle composed the Opposition, the First Lord declaring that he believed in continuing the subsidy, regardless of the consequences.⁴¹ Yet the Duke had vacillated to such a degree that effective resistance was practically impossible. Bute told Fox on a later day that Newcastle's secret correspondence with the ambassadors abroad had made his own situation intolerable.⁴²

Perhaps Newcastle had been revenging himself for the many indignities he had suffered ; more likely his passion for playing the rôle of regulator was too deep-seated to make reformation possible. At all events he was struggling to keep his head above water in a manner that was wholly ineffectual. At a meeting of the Cabinet (May 4th) the Opposition enjoyed the fruitless satisfaction of representing the inexpediency of withdrawing the subsidy, and it is interesting to note that Newcastle's jealousy had reached so high a pitch that he believed there was an ulterior motive at the bottom of the conflict with

⁴⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, April 6, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32936, f. 396.

⁴¹ Newcastle to Yorke, April 9, 1762 : *ibid.*, f. 448. Newcastle's primary considerations were no doubt political. Even should he continue to support the policy of Bute, he could hardly expect to save himself from downfall ; if, on the other hand, he now espoused the cause of Frederick, there were hopes of forming a political combination in the future.

⁴² *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 64.

Spain, which he condemned as a ‘silly maritime war’.⁴³ Meanwhile Bute had continued to nominate bishops without consulting his superior, and even gave some preferments in the Duke’s own department of the Treasury.⁴⁴ Worse than all this—Messrs. Elliot and Oswald—two members of his own Treasury Board—were instructed on every occasion to thwart and annoy him.⁴⁵ Still the veteran time-server lingered, reluctant even to think of retiring from a position he had held with but one interruption for a period of eight years. His situation under Pitt had been very different from his partnership with Pelham, but even Pitt had not troubled his fondest foibles, and now even these lay at the mercy of Bute.

The crisis came in May when a vote of credit was to be moved in Parliament. Bute, who intended to withdraw the subsidy in the middle of the campaign, wished only one million to be voted—solely for the expenses of the Spanish war ; but Newcastle, evidently not penetrating the design of his enemies, insisted strongly upon two millions, on the ground that otherwise the Treasury would be obliged to stop payment to Prussia in July ; and in this Barrington seconded him.⁴⁶ Grenville, however, was in this instance Bute’s agent, and he speedily spread disaffection at the

⁴³ Newcastle to Yorke, May 14, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32938, f. 239. ⁴⁴ *Fox’s Memoirs*, p. 61.

⁴⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 154.

⁴⁶ *Fox’s Memoirs*, p. 62.

Treasury, 'overruling' the Duke (as the latter expressed it) 'at his own board'.⁴⁷ Oswald, Elliot, and Martin (Secretary of the Treasury) all furnished evidence to contradict Newcastle, and they even went so far as to declare that they would oppose him on the question in Parliament—a resolution in which Grenville concurred.⁴⁸

Such flagrant insubordination even Newcastle could not endure—at least, so he thought at the time—and on the 14th of May after previously notifying his intention to Bute,⁴⁹ the Duke asked His Majesty's leave to resign. The King, according to Newcastle's account, was 'barely civil'.⁵⁰ On hearing his intention, the Sovereign answered coldly, 'Then, my Lord, I must fill your place as well as I can.'⁵¹ Yet there is one point that redounds to the Duke's credit, and that was his refusal to accept a pension when it was offered him. Had his conduct remained as dignified in other respects, the contrast with Pitt's obsequious gratitude in the past autumn would have been all the more marked.

Upon the acceptance of his resignation Newcastle

⁴⁷ Newcastle to Devonshire, May 4, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32938, f. 47.

⁴⁸ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 62 ; Newcastle to Yorke, May 14, 1762.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Newcastle to Rockingham, May 14, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32938, f. 262.

⁵¹ The actual words, being on Walpole's authority, may never have been spoken ; but they certainly represent correctly the attitude of both the King and his chief counsellor.

assured all whom he met (Ilchester among others) that Devonshire and Mansfield had both expostulated with Bute, the latter pleading for an hour without receiving the smallest hint that His Lordship would relent.⁵² Ilchester imparted to Fox what he had heard and the latter told Bute, who answered, ‘Nothing is more true’. But on Fox’s putting the question to Mansfield, the Chief Justice replied, ‘Not an hour, for I soon saw it was to no purpose.’⁵³ ‘The King,’ wrote the deeply wounded Duke, in describing an audience two days after his retirement, ‘did not drop one word of concern at my leaving him; nor even made me a polite compliment after fifty years’ service and devotion to the interests of his Royal Family;’⁵⁴ and Viri told Devonshire that the resolutions had been taken to make no remonstrance, if the Duke should again talk of resigning; had there been any, one is tempted to believe that Newcastle would again have ‘consulted his friends’ and repented. As for Bute, his work of destruction was now completed.

With the fall of the Opposition leader, Hardwicke

⁵² *Fox’s Memoirs*, p. 63.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 64; Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 133. Bute insisted that Newcastle was fixed in his determination to resign (Newcastle to Rockingham, May 14, 1762), and we may perhaps observe therein a fear lest the Duke might after all reconsider the matter, if he were given any encouragement.

⁵⁴ Newcastle to Rockingham, May 14, 1762. The King had been fairly gracious when Newcastle begged leave to resign, and it would have now cost him little had he continued so. Doubtless his youth and egotism were responsible for such thoughtlessness.

and Devonshire retired permanently from the Cabinet, although the King permitted the latter to retain his Chamberlain's staff on that understanding.⁵⁵ There was little disposition, however, on the part of Newcastle's friends or dependants to show resentment at the treatment of their chief, and the fact that Hardwicke, who had once followed him into exile, now permitted his sons to retain their places was a point that rankled in the Duke's mind for long afterwards.⁵⁶

Pitt was overheard to say several months previously : ' Now is the time ; if those I have left had the spirit (which they have not), they would send and recall every man from Germany and so ruin me—but there 's no danger of it.' ⁵⁷ In such a statement as this we see how much less Pitt understood men than measures. *One* man had had the requisite 'spirit',⁵⁸ and although that particular measure was not carried out till peace was assured, an equally significant one took place when the subsidy to Frederick was at last withdrawn—or rather, was not renewed. In his last letter as Secretary of State Bute wrote a manly explanation to Mitchell, justifying the step which he had taken, as well as denying the insinuation against him with respect to Russia and Austria—

⁵⁵ Newcastle to Granby, October 29, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32944, f. 128.

⁵⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 13, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32945, f. 352.

⁵⁷ Fox to Bute, January 1762 : Fitzmaurice, I. 127.

⁵⁸ Page 226.

all of which the Earl desired to be communicated to Frederick. ‘The weight of Spain,’ he wrote among other arguments, ‘is thrown into our opposite scale, and that of Russia, and Sweden too, is taken out of his.’⁵⁹ Undoubtedly the safety of Frederick was still far from assured, but with Russia in active alliance his danger could be only temporary; and even after he lost this strange ally, the fortress of Schweidnitz was easily recovered. Meanwhile the partial desertion of Frederick by the English Ministry was the first important step towards the establishment of peace.

There was nothing now to keep Bute from the primacy. The King heaped fresh honours upon him,⁶⁰ and more friends of Newcastle attended his first levee than the Duke liked to admit.⁶¹ It is interesting to note here that in the debate in the Commons on the vote of credit (May 12th) Pitt alluded to the ‘general opinion’ that Fox was to succeed the Duke of Newcastle.⁶² Such a rumour must have been based on the belief that Bute was not fitted for the Treasury, and would continue to govern from the Foreign Office as Pitt had once done. It was a compliment, however, to Fox’s abilities and a proof of his renewed interest in the

⁵⁹ Bute to Mitchell, May 26, 1762 : *Mitchell Papers*, I. 283.

⁶⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 139.

⁶¹ The Duke’s secretary wrote that one of his levees was ‘pretty full’.—Jones to Newcastle, June 11, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32939, f. 244. It is probable that Newcastle had sought to be informed on this point.

⁶² Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 139.

Government, although there is scarcely any doubt but that the Paymaster would have refused so thankless a promotion.

Fox criticized Bute's haste in turning out Newcastle, expressing his belief that he ought to have waited until sure of securing peace.⁶³ Yet events which followed in some way justified the Earl's step, while previous events certainly did ; apart from his ambition to be First Lord, he had felt, no doubt, that to purge the Cabinet of an obstructive element was the surest guarantee of undisturbed progress toward peace. Sir Francis Dashwood—a man of little experience to warrant the promotion—was, apparently on Fox's suggestion, made Chancellor of the Exchequer.⁶⁴ The former declared that with Bute at the Treasury and Grenville as Leader of the Commons, it really mattered little who held the seals of the Exchequer ; but the truth may have been that Fox had little idea that he would ever be especially interested in the Bute Administration, and he could now give friendly counsel without thinking twice. He was chiefly desirous that some office should be found for Rigby, and hence suggested to Shelburne that his friend's services should be employed.⁶⁵

⁶³ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 76. Fox had probably in mind the Duke of Newcastle's great retinue of dependants in Parliament.

⁶⁴ Succeeding Barrington whose removal was politically necessary after his support of Newcastle on the subsidy question.

⁶⁵ 'He has spirit,' continued Fox, 'is ready, and will soon, if I don't mistake, be the most popular speaker in the House

Shelburne himself appeared disinclined to accept office,⁶⁶ although Fox pressed him very strongly to alter his resolution,⁶⁷ and on a former occasion the Paymaster's words had dissuaded him from giving way to momentary resentment, which had led him to contemplate farming instead of continuing in politics.⁶⁸ Grenville, after a trifling dispute on a subject of etiquette,⁶⁹ succeeded Bute as Foreign Secretary for the North, and Melcombe crowned his long career of successful intrigue by entering the Cabinet.

The greatest difficulty lay in filling the vacant headship of the Admiralty. Perhaps with a hope of conciliating Cumberland, who had so long been exasperated by the delay in conferring Lady Caroline's peerage, perhaps also because past experience was not to be despised, the important post was offered to Lord Sandwich. The Earl, for his part, was very evidently pleased at the thought of ending a ten years' retirement, but his obligations to Cumberland forbade acceptance without consulting him, and when he did so, His Royal Highness had very little to say on the matter, and quite plainly showed his disapproval.⁷⁰

of Commons.'—Fox to Shelburne, May 13, 1762 : Fitzmaurice, I. 143.

⁶⁶ Shelburne to Fox, May 20, 1762 : Fitzmaurice, I. 142.

⁶⁷ Fox to Shelburne, May 23, 1762 : ibid. I. 143.

⁶⁸ Fox to Shelburne, July 29, 1761 : ibid. I. 105.

⁶⁹ See *Grenville Papers*, I. 450.

⁷⁰ Jones to Newcastle, June 11, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32939, f. 294.

The office was then talked of for Melcombe,⁷¹ but the latter's health seemed too precarious to make the offer advisable, and it was apparently not tendered.⁷² Sandwich still yearned for the honour,⁷³ and Newcastle believed that Fox, whom he labelled 'Lord Bute's first adviser and agent in everything' had a hand in the present affair.⁷⁴ But Cumberland continued to prove obdurate and Halifax was finally transferred from Ireland to the post. It is more than probable that Fox had been behind the proposed elevation of Sandwich, not only on the ground that it might, as has been said, conciliate the Duke of Cumberland, but also because Bute was willing to give Sandwich's Vice-Treasurership in Ireland to the Paymaster's friend, Rigby.⁷⁵ So the outcome of the affair was a twofold disappointment to Fox.

But the Duke of Newcastle had not been long out of office before he repented of his tardy and unwonted dignity in resigning office, and 'made (writes Shelburne) every sort of submission and actually offered it through Lord Mansfield';⁷⁶ and

⁷¹ Newcastle to Rockingham, June 12, 1762: Add. MSS., 32939, f. 311.

⁷² Fox declared that it would have been 'infinitely ridiculous and disgraceful to Lord Bute'.—*Memoirs*, p. 65. Certainly Melcombe had no capacity for so important an office.

⁷³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 16, 1762: Add. MSS., 32939, f. 371.

⁷⁴ Newcastle to Devonshire, June 23, 1762: Add. MSS., 32940, f. 44.

⁷⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 139.

⁷⁶ Shelburne's own account.—Fitzmaurice, I. 136. New-

had it not been for Bute's momentary elation, the shrewder judgement of Fox might well have prevailed.⁷⁷ Indeed the Whigs, who had had at least a nominal rallying point when Newcastle was First Lord, were now more than ever in disruption. Cold relations existed between Newcastle and Mansfield ;⁷⁸ and yet the Chief Justice had no voice in the inner councils of the Cabinet ;⁷⁹ while Bedford, always several paces in advance of his colleagues, was declaring for peace on any terms.⁸⁰

Before considering the negotiations which brought the war to a close, we should turn our attention once more to the Paymaster, who all this time occupied the position of confidential adviser to the Administration without sharing its hardships or responsibilities. In April his health had been poor,⁸¹ and he spent as much time as possible at the seaside, having built a fantastic villa called ' Kingsgate ' on the Isle of Thanet. The following month his health seems to have improved,⁸² and Lady Holland's patent, which bore the date of the

castle denied the story and attributed it to Fox.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 28, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32940, f. 112. According to Shelburne this 'submission', if, as seems probable, it were genuine, was 'declined in the strongest manner'.

⁷⁷ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 76.

⁷⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, June 22, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32940, f. 24.

⁷⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 16, 1762 : *ibid.*, f. 372.

⁸⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 28, 1762.

⁸¹ Walpole to Mann, April 30, 1762 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, V. 200.

⁸² Shelburne to Fox, May 20, 1762 : *Fitzmaurice*, I. 142.

6th of May, was alone sufficient to restore Fox's spirits. He regarded with contempt, however, the intimation of Bute and the King (when Fox went to thank him) that the peerage had been conferred as a favour to His Royal Highness.⁸³ Fox (who had received the heartiest congratulations from his friend⁸⁴) was perfectly aware that the ruse of the Court would achieve no success. The Duke of Cumberland had more than one grievance against his royal nephew and the Earl of Bute. He was not of a disposition to become easily reconciled to the triumphs of his old rivals in the royal house, and the downfall of the Whig minister who had served under his father, made him feel that the old spirit of Leicester House had been carried too far; yet it appeared—and a credit it was to his loyalty—that the chief ground for resentment was the stupid delay in fulfilling the promise to his friend. Such behaviour not only showed how very small was the influence which the Duke himself possessed, but seemed a foolish bit of ingratitude to the man who (whatever his motives may have been) had once struggled, single-handed, to procure Bute the Stole. It is certain, however, that Fox treated the matter with good humour, and he had too many enemies already to seek the addition of others to the list. In all probability the narrow, prejudiced monarch shared his mother's hatred for the man who had wished to separate him from her, and there is too

⁸³ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 66.

⁸⁴ Cumberland to Fox, May 1, 1762: *ibid.*, p. 66 n.

much reason to believe that he and not Bute had been the instigator of this shuffling.

In July, on Melcombe's death, Fox received his reversion in Ireland,⁸⁵ which made an acceptable addition to his already prodigious fortune. The summer, we may suppose, he spent entirely at Kingsgate, enjoying the rest and preoccupied with his family. 'For my own part,' he wrote to Shelburne in August, 'sea air gives me appetite, sleep and spirits; I am very happy and continually amused, and with trifles that can lead to nothing sad and serious. Forty years hence may Your Lordship be even as I now am. I have given the precedence, as indeed I do the preference, to domestic affairs.'⁸⁶ Some men might have smarted at great unpopularity—not Henry Fox!

During the spring overtures of peace had been sent out by the Ministry⁸⁷ and eagerly accepted by France. The main channel of negotiation appeared to be Count Viri, who acted a sort of mediator's rôle between Bute and Choiseul. Nevertheless

⁸⁵ Clerkship of the Pells in Ireland for his own life and that of two of his sons. It was the favour which Cumberland had obtained for him in April 1757.

⁸⁶ Fox to Shelburne, August 16, 1762: *Fitzmaurice*, I. 147.

⁸⁷ The definite programme was laid down in the Cabinet meeting of March 29, 1762, at St. James's.—Add. MSS., 32999, f. 452. Bute had taken some secret steps toward the establishment of peace immediately after Pitt's retirement; but these efforts made little headway until spring. Baron Solar, Sardinian Ambassador at Paris, assisted Viri in the semi-official negotiation, and a correspondence went on between them.

an exchange of envoys was planned on the precedent of 1761, and on the 6th of September the Duke of Bedford left England in that capacity. The choice was significant ; for Bedford, as we have seen, had been more openly hostile to the war than any of his colleagues, and yet it was perhaps to curb Bedford's radical tendencies that the Earl maintained a concurrent negotiation.

For a time the Cabinet had appeared almost as unanimous as Bute had any right to expect. But in July the First Lord had been alone in believing that England should make a separate peace without reference to Spain, and his only consolation came from Kingsgate—provided Fox really expressed what he felt.⁸⁸ No doubt Bute's motive in this instance was to hasten on the Peace by limiting the field of necessary diplomacy. Two months later a more serious disagreement took place. The English navy had continued its career of triumph among the French and Spanish Indies, and in August, Havana, the port of Cuba, was taken. As soon as the victory became known, Bute was vexed by a problem, which his lack of experience in foreign affairs made all the more difficult to solve ; and it was this inexperience, together with a reasonable impatience to bring the war to a close, that led him to commit a fault of judgement, unpardonable in the eyes of most historians. Bute thought that the Spanish con-

⁸⁸ *Fox's Memoirs*, pp. 69–70.

cession regarding the log-wood⁸⁹ would be deemed sufficient by the allies without England's retention of Havana;⁹⁰ and Bedford not only sustained him, but expressed his apprehension that if the point were insisted upon, the negotiations might be broken off.⁹¹ But, as Bute told Fox afterwards, not a single Councillor—not even Halifax—would consent to give up the important conquest without an equivalent.⁹² Grenville, who had already joined issue with Bute on the plan to restore Guadeloupe and St. Lucia, was particularly insistent in the Cabinet meeting of September 29th; and the two Secretaries finally announced their refusal to sign any treaty which relinquished Havana.⁹³ Meanwhile the question came up again of a separate peace, which Mansfield vehemently opposed, but which others advised Bute to enforce by virtue of his own power, Fox, it was said, going so far as to suggest a clean sweep of the Newcastles in employment, who could not be made to yield on this point.⁹⁴ It was during these controversies (and

⁸⁹ One of the demands made by the Court of Madrid in 1760 was the prohibition of the English colonists in Honduras from cutting logwood in the gulf of that name.

⁹⁰ Shelburne to Fox, August 10, 1762: *Fitzmaurice I.* 145.

⁹¹ Bedford to Egremont, October 11, 1762: app. to Mahon's *Hist. of Eng.*

⁹² Rigby to Bedford, September 30, 1762: *Bedford Corres. III.* 131.

⁹³ Conversation between the Duke of Newcastle and his Royal Highness, dated October 3, 1762: Add. MSS., 32944, f. 22.

⁹⁴ Newcastle to Rockingham, September 20, 1762: Add. MSS., 32942, f. 307.

perhaps because of them) that Pitt made the strange assertion to his 'creatures and intimates' that 'no one in this country was fit to be at the head of affairs but the Duke of Cumberland'.⁹⁵ The statement was reported to His Royal Highness and was not without its effect.

The unpopularity of Bute and his peace-policy was without doubt more violent than that of any minister since Walpole in 1733, and it probably exceeded even that. Fox, writing on the 7th of September, had declared, 'There is certainly more clamour against him than there ever was against any man ; more acrimony in that clamour ; and a combination made that sounds very formidable against him.'⁹⁶ The fact that the First Lord was a Scotsman, at a time when the northern country suffered much from prejudice, was one of the targets of the public enmity, and Newcastle showed the same feeling in his correspondence when he railed at the Earl's 'sole power'. But worse than the aspersions cast upon his nationality were the base libels which charged him with improper relations with the Princess Dowager. It was but the natural consequence of the mushroom growth, so to speak, of a man who, without talent, had won a royal friendship, and who was at the same time an object of hatred by reason of his policy. Fox seemed to think that it was the man, and not the measures, that was

⁹⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 30, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32942, f. 427.

⁹⁶ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 76.

disliked. ‘It is easy, even at this distance, to see,’ he wrote, ‘that no terms of peace would either lessen or increase the clamour. It is aimed at Lord Bute, not at his measures, and, which is shameful, many who approve the Peace will join in opposing it as a means of destroying him. But I hope every step will be taken and endeavour used to weather the storm ; it will be weathered, and halcyon days succeed, that is such halcyon days as Ministers can have.’⁹⁷

But not Ministers alone were begrimed ‘halcyon days’ in those critical months. Fox, in his *Memoirs*, remarks upon the fact of his own name appearing in many of the countless caricatures and other vehicles of the popular abuse. ‘It is singular,’ he writes, ‘that after five years’ silence in Parliament, being neither of the Court or Cabinet, and besides at present in a place as retired as a hermitage, where I see nobody, meddle with no business, nor stand in anybody’s way—a people, whom I never offended, cannot let me alone ; as if it was, of course, that when there is to be abuse I must be one object of it.’⁹⁸ It does seem curious that Fox, who was but a reflection of his age, should have had to suffer such a weight of unpopularity. It was not so in 1756, when his name, though often maligned, was yet frequently distinguished from those of his colleagues. But perhaps the explanation may be found in the simple fact that Fox had

⁹⁷ Fox to Shelburne, September 4, 1762 : Fitzmaurice, I. 149.

⁹⁸ *Fox’s Memoirs*, p. 71.

left the political stage (with all its opportunities of public service) with the single ambition of growing rich on the interest of the funds of the Pay Office. Such is the story we may read in the cartoons ;⁹⁹ and surely popular hatred was but a fitting reward for a public official who—however legitimately—gains a fortune from the State.

But Fox was as usual contemptuous of public opinion—a fact which after all may in some degree account for its bitterness against him. ‘This is but little concern to me,’ he continues, ‘it is a great deal more that to be an honest man next session I must offend the Duke of Cumberland. If I do, it shall be his fault that he is offended, for I will only speak my mind, and if he would own it, his mind too upon this Peace.’ Fox evidently believed that hatred of His Majesty and the Court party was the real motive for Cumberland’s hostility to Bute’s measures ; but the inevitable parting of these two friends was almost a tragedy in the lives of both. Cumberland was certainly attached to Fox and had reason to be ; while Fox, on his side, had made his affection for the Duke the mainspring of his political career. Judged by his writings, the Paymaster seems to have been perfectly honest in his

⁹⁹ It was natural, of course, that people outside the political world should chafe at conditions which appealed but little to the fortunate ones within. It is ‘public opinion’, too, which is the first to resent it when a man of ability makes a failure of his career. Much in Pitt might be forgiven in view of the services he had rendered. In Fox, on the contrary, there was nothing for the populace to admire.

advocacy of the Peace which Bute was securing, and his programme of action, when the treaty should be put to vote, was sketched several weeks before he came to feel any personal interest in the matter.

The Duke of Cumberland looked upon Bute as the representative of the element in politics which he hated—namely, the old party of Leicester House. At one time he penned a message to the First Lord, giving his ideas on the subject of the Peace, but both he and Fox soon decided that the wording was impolitic and the message was never sent. Shortly after this Fox accidentally met Bute, who told him the terms of peace which he expected to obtain, and then asked him what he believed Cumberland's opinion would be. The Paymaster answered that His Royal Highness would probably doubt if such a peace could be obtained, and would rather have any one in England obtain it than Bute, but that he was too honest not to be glad peace was procured even by him (Bute), rather than not procured at all; 'in which,' writes Fox, 'alas! I was very much mistaken.'¹⁰⁰

During the last week of September¹⁰¹ the Paymaster went informally to Windsor Lodge and held a long discussion with the Duke upon the national and political outlook. Fox had written

¹⁰⁰ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 80. Fox wrote to Cumberland on the 29th, relating what he had said.—Albemarle, *Memoirs of Rockingham*, I. 128.

¹⁰¹ Probably on the 30th, the day after the letter was written.

to him what he had said to Bute, and Cumberland was inclined to believe that his friend had gone too far. In discussing public measures, Fox doubted Bute's ability to pursue his policy, and said that he 'could not govern his own people', instancing the fact that Bute had been obliged to give way on the question of Havana. There was some consolation, however, in the fact that many of Newcastle's dependants had come over to the Administration; neither Pitt nor Newcastle, he said, had 'gained any ground'.¹⁰² Fox must have been influenced by events since he made the addition to his *Memoirs* early in September. He had then raised the question: 'What will be the immediate consequence for Lord Bute of this violence against him?' and had decided that if the Tories and Scots would stand by him, such a number would join the First Lord as would ensure him a majority. 'And then,' he continued, 'after two or three angry debates, supported by no very great divisions, we shall get again into smooth water.'¹⁰³ Such a view was, on the whole, optimistic, but perhaps Fox had since come to feel, that if Bute could not control his own Cabinet, he would find it doubly hard to control the Houses.

The desperate situation of Bute can hardly be exaggerated. The entire political salvation of this ambitious intriguer depended upon the conclusion

¹⁰² Conversation between H.R.H. and Newcastle at Windsor Lodge, October 3, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32944, f. 22.

¹⁰³ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 77.

of peace. Should his colleagues make further obstruction, or should Parliament finally reject it, his position was doomed, and no amount of royal favour could preserve or restore it. Out of doors the populace clamoured against him ; infamous scribblers tried unceasingly to blacken his character; and on every side were enemies ready and eager to overthrow him. Added to the dilemma which external circumstances were creating for him, the Earl was perpetually afraid of being governed, a feeling which, instigated by the desire to impress his views upon the shaky Cabinet, led him sometimes to doubt the very feasibility of his own projects.¹⁰⁴ Yet with all his defects, Bute was far from being the blind and overbearing despot that Newcastle had been, and, with a single exception,¹⁰⁵ he held stedfastly to one general policy, only wavering in certain details, and always loyal to the King, his benefactor. It may be said, moreover, with some reason, that no man in England could have made a peace that would have satisfied France, Spain, Pitt and the majority of the British nation.

In the meantime Bute must of necessity have some one to guide the Peace through Parliament and guarantee its success. Grenville, besides being temporarily estranged from the First Lord, was not sufficiently adept in the arts of corruption. There was clearly no one fitter for the task than

¹⁰⁴ See the estimate of Bute by Shelburne.—Fitzmaurice, I. 140.

¹⁰⁵ Page 216.

the indefatigable Paymaster. It might take great urging to drag him from his comfortable retirement (for his engagements with the Ministry had not been arduous), and obviously a particularly tempting inducement must be offered ; but however it should be managed—by fair means or foul—the step must be taken, for success was imperative.

Fox was certainly able to keep silence when he deemed it desirable, for when he saw Cumberland at Windsor, the Ministry had already opened negotiations with him through Shelburne,¹⁰⁶ and the latter believed that he would agree. On the 6th the mutual friend of Bute and Fox went to the Paymaster again (at Margate)¹⁰⁷ and asked him if he would accept the Seals and the management of the Commons, ‘as Mr. Grenville, half unable, half unwilling, could go on no longer.’¹⁰⁸ Apparently Fox demanded time to think it over, for

¹⁰⁶ Shelburne to Bute, September 1762, Fitzmaurice, I. 154. Fox's probable motive in keeping silence was his uncertainty as to how his impulsive friend would behave himself. It is probable too that he was still undecided in his own mind what he should do. On the 29th he had sounded Cumberland by letter for the purpose of ascertaining whether the latter would be willing to mediate in event of Bute's desiring some political reinforcement.—Albemarle, *Memoirs of Rockingham*, I. 451. Undoubtedly Fox was thinking of himself when he wrote this, and in spite of his assertions to the contrary it is evident that the Ministry had already begun to treat with him.

¹⁰⁷ Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 451.

¹⁰⁸ Fox to Bedford, October 13, 1761 : *Bedford Corres.* III. 133.

he waited to send Shelburne a memorandum upon which he submitted his final decision—which was not to accept the Seals, as that would mean additional business too great for him to undertake ; but he stated that in other respects he was entirely at His Majesty's service. He wished Bute to be assured that he had not considered the Duke of Cumberland in weighing the matter, and he took pains to intimate that Bute might better fail to carry the Peace than negotiate with the Duke of Newcastle¹⁰⁹—which, he declared, would only weaken the First Lord and do no good. In a letter which followed he told Shelburne with assumed modesty that his talents were not sufficient for the work before him, and that his installation in the Ministry might do the King more harm than good. He concluded by saying that he intended to see Cumberland, in order that false imputations might be avoided.¹¹⁰

It was only with difficulty that Fox was ‘excused’, as he himself put it, ‘from being Secretary of State’.¹¹¹ The King made a special

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum (written by Fox for Shelburne), Fitzmaurice, I. 154. We have noticed (page 235) that Fox criticized Bute for the course which he took of driving Newcastle out of office. But we have reason to suppose now that Fox was beginning to realize his fine opportunity of destroying the whole power of Newcastle in politics.

¹¹⁰ Fox to Shelburne, October 10, 1762 : Fitzmaurice, I. 155. Clearly Fox was determined now to undertake the work, and wished his employers to have no occasion for distrusting his sincerity.

¹¹¹ Fox to Bedford, October 13, 1762 : *Bedford Corres.* III. 133.

reply through Shelburne and pleaded that Fox's decision was but 'half a measure'; yet, if it must be so, His Majesty was pleased to consent that he should be called to the Cabinet Council, and have the management of the Commons, including the entire disposition of employments¹¹²—a privilege which Fox had never heretofore enjoyed.¹¹³

Fox, on his side, was perfectly business-like throughout the transaction. As he wrote later to Bedford, he protested frankly that his support would be 'adding unpopularity to unpopularity', and there was 'already enough'; but, remonstrances failing, it had been put to him so strongly that he was constrained to feel it a 'point of honour' to obey. 'I am very sure,' he continued (to Bedford), 'that is my motive, because I have nothing either to wish or ask (a palpable falsehood), and am most unhappy to leave the quiet life I enjoyed, and shall, I fear, find was necessary to my health.' Yet we find that the King was ungracious enough to say to Grenville (who protested at the appointment), 'We must call in bad men to govern bad men.' The ingratitude of the

¹¹² Substance of what passed between H.R.H. and Newcastle at Winsdor Lodge, dated October 20, 1762: Add. MSS., 32944, f. 57.

¹¹³ Even in the first instance in March 1754, Newcastle had not intended that Fox should act entirely without his authority, though by these arrangements the Manager would have been in his chief's entire confidence, and possessed *carte blanche* in disposing of *some* of the employments. Now, however, money and patronage were completely in the hands of the new leader.

Crown is noteworthy, because of its bearing on future events.

Meanwhile Fox interviewed the Duke of Cumberland on the 11th. Whether His Royal Highness signified his approval or not is far from clear, but his recommendation in the matter showed either a very great ambition for Fox, or an irresistible impulse to push the Court to extremes. His proposition had been no less than that Bute, after receiving all the marks of favour he might desire in the way of titles, &c., should yield the Treasury to Fox. What the Paymaster replied is unfortunately not on record, but we know that he was unwilling to consent to so radical a measure, even if he had any desire for such promotion ; and in consequence of his refusal the relations between the two friends were never again cordial.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ From the *Lansdowne MSS.*, Fitzmaurice, I. 157. One gets a very different impression from the record of Newcastle's conversation with Cumberland (dated November 2), but Fox would hardly have ventured to communicate the astounding proposal to Shelburne, if it had not been true. Cumberland, on the other hand, was of a nature which could not easily brook contradiction, and now that he was planning to unite politically with Newcastle, he had every reason to omit mentioning the advice which he had given Fox. At all events one point seems clear : it was Cumberland who abandoned Fox, not Fox who abandoned Cumberland. If Fox, who was the chief person concerned in the question of the peerage, had become reconciled to the Court, there was no reason why Cumberland should continue to show resentment. Indeed, had Cumberland declared to Fox that he disapproved of the Paymaster's bargain with the Court, the point would almost certainly have been discussed in the letters between Bute, Fox,

Bute and Shelburne had commended Fox highly for his generous acquiescence, and their thanks were unstinted.¹¹⁵ The reward for his services was to be a peerage, which, in view of Fox's later aspirations, it was certainly a blunder on his part not to interpret specifically to mean an earldom. His assistance at this critical time was more than worth the price.

On the 13th Fox was 'declared a Cabinet Councillor and His Majesty's Minister in the House of Commons'.¹¹⁶ The words are significant, both as showing the vast political power which the Ministry abandoned to Fox, and also as representing a most striking application of the plan which Legge suggested in 1754 as the most efficient method of managing the Commons.¹¹⁷ Not only was

and Shelburne at this period. But far from signifying disapproval, Cumberland virtually suggested a new bargain with the Court ; and, if he now expressed detestation of Bute, it was merely a revival of his old feelings against Leicester House. The breach with Fox, however, was caused by the latter's refusal to accept the proposal we have mentioned.

¹¹⁵ A letter from Bute to Shelburne testifies to the former's appreciation (temporary at least) of Fox's services. 'The more,' he writes, 'I reflect on Mr. Fox's conduct at this crisis, the more I admire the noble and generous manner in which he quits retirement and security to stand with me the brunt of popular clamour, in supporting the best of princes against the most ungrateful set of men this country ever produced.'—Bute to Shelburne, Fitzmaurice, I. 185. The last sentence may perhaps be construed to reveal the animosity which Bute felt towards the Whigs.

¹¹⁶ Fox to Bedford, October 13, 1762.

¹¹⁷ Vol. I, page 187.

Fox to be leader of the Lower House, but a special delegate of the King in that capacity. To the King alone he was responsible in the management. The Crown might corrupt the Commons by proxy.

The promotion of Fox was not the only change which occurred at this time. Simultaneously Grenville and Halifax exchanged places in the Ministry.¹¹⁸ It was said by the new Secretary that Grenville's 'tediousness' was partly responsible for the transference, and that another cause was his violent disagreement with Bute, who wished the preliminaries to be signed before they were submitted to Parliament—a device for avoiding what the Earl said would 'create confusion'. The newly-appointed Secretary was a man of talent and enterprise, although of an exceedingly factious disposition, as we have had more than one occasion to notice. Grenville, for his part, said he was content and would give any assistance in the Commons that was desired.¹¹⁹

The long conversation which Fox had had with Cumberland on the 11th caused much speculation in the political world,¹²⁰ but it is unlikely that any

¹¹⁸ Grenville's resentment on this account was partly appeased by a half-promise from Bute that he should succeed to the Treasury when the latter finally retired.—Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 484.

¹¹⁹ Halifax's interview with Newcastle, dated October 18, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32944, f. 34.

¹²⁰ Sackville to Irwin, October 17, 1762 : Stopford-Sackville MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.* (quarto), Report IX, app. part I, p. 17.

one save Bute and Shelburne learned its real nature. The Duke himself, who was nursing much resentment against Fox for his refusal to acquiesce in his scheme, took pains to give Newcastle a biased account¹²¹ of the interview, carefully omitting the real cause of provocation. Among other things, he said that Fox had declined the Seals because he would not sign a peace to which Grenville had objected. This can hardly be regarded as credible, since Grenville was now apparently in favour of the Peace (an equivalent for Havana having been found in the cession of Florida), and the allegation is consistent neither with Fox's statement to Shelburne,¹²² nor with common sense. Fox was not the kind of man to care what Grenville or any one else thought, and had certainly raised no objections to the various features of Bute's programme.¹²³

What, then, were Fox's motives for emerging from retirement and plunging deep into politics once more ? Were his motives sordid or generous ? It is not improbable that they were both. We have had occasion more than once to notice both

¹²¹ Conversation between H.R.H. and Newcastle, dated November 2, 1762.

¹²² Page 250.

¹²³ 'Mr. Grenville,' wrote Fox to Bedford, 'having with the Seals got rid of his fears also, and Lord Mansfield seeing that doubts and difficulties and mischievous though small criticisms are no longer hearkened to, I may venture to say there is not a man now in the Council who does not wish to see the preliminaries signed by Your Grace as soon as possible.' October 26, 1762 : *Bedford Corres.* III. 140.

good nature and ambition influencing the same act, and Fox's refusals in the course of his career are almost an absent quantity. He had never spoken of a peerage for himself in any of his letters which are in evidence; yet it may well be that he had no cause for expecting it, and he had been shrewd enough to solicit one for Lady Holland, as more easily obtainable than one for himself, which would have given her the same title. If we are to judge from his conduct afterwards, it is easily deducible that the peerage was the chief factor in tempting him to undertake the difficult and unpopular task that lay before him. Yet there is also some reason to believe that Fox granted the King's request largely because of the favour which, grudged though it may have been and certainly no more than the fulfilment of a simple bargain, had been recently accorded his wife. Not that he seriously felt it a 'point of honour' to submit—for such (at least as a primary motive) would be rather difficult to believe—but if Fox's motives were in any degree generous, it was rather because he felt the unconscious gratitude and infinite relief which comes of success after a hard-fought battle. Finally, Fox may have felt a certain professional interest in the matter—the zeal of a skilled corruptionist about to try his hand once more in a kind of work for which he was so eminently fitted ; and, indeed, the very fact that the King had appealed to him was a compliment to that talent which outshone all others in the sphere which now lay open to him.

But so far as the Seals were concerned, Fox had done well to refuse. He had long ago determined to keep out of high official position, and in the present instance he would have gained little and lost irretrievably. He could not expect to keep the Pay Office and the Secretaryship as well, and it was not to be hoped that he could remain in the latter office after signing an unpopular Peace ; besides he had not the health to continue there, even if for other reasons it was possible to do so. Finally, his own explanation appears most reasonable—he could not undertake the political task with success, if he were to be hampered with the additional burden of a Secretary's duties. Whatever Fox's motives may have been, it was exceedingly fortunate for the Bute Ministry and the credit of the King that he took the responsibility of the Peace of Paris upon his shoulders. Without the Paymaster's aid one can easily imagine what the result might have been.

Fox was glad that it was commonly believed that he entered upon his new duties with unwillingness, and particularly that the King's action was interpreted as significant of his determination to enforce the Peace ;¹²⁴ such, in fact, was encouraging to the Ministers in their policy and of assistance to Fox himself.¹²⁵ The statement that the Paymaster sought Waldegrave and Devonshire for

¹²⁴ Memorandum for Shelburne, Fitzmaurice, I. 154.

¹²⁵ It enabled Fox to throw upon the King the responsibility for the measures to be taken. The Peace must be supported because the King was publicly committed to it.

their co-operation rests on Walpole's unsupported authority, and is therefore open to question.¹²⁶ It was, moreover, before his appointment that Halifax persuaded the King that the Administration should be widened, and gained His Majesty's permission to make overtures to Newcastle.¹²⁷ The Duke had already been solicited (without authority) by Lyttelton,¹²⁸ and now at last had the good sense to keep clear of an administration that despised him. It will be remembered, also, that Fox earnestly warned Bute against making advances to the Newcastles; and when the Duke of Cumberland had recently complained to him of the exclusion of his father's ministers, Fox had replied, 'They have excluded themselves.'¹²⁹ There is, therefore, much reason to doubt if Fox tried to induce prominent Whigs to support the Administration. It is possible that he tried for a reconciliation with Cumberland,¹³⁰ but this is the most that we can believe from the evidence.¹³¹

¹²⁶ There is apparently no reference to any such overtures in Newcastle's correspondence, and the Duke would certainly have discussed any efforts to win over two prominent Whigs.

¹²⁷ Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*; Halifax's interview with Newcastle (already cited). Halifax made these overtures on October 14, and not at Fox's instigation.

¹²⁸ Substance of what passed with my Lord Lyttelton, dated August 24, 1762: Add. MSS., 32941, f. 370.

¹²⁹ The conversation at Windsor Lodge, dated October 19, 1762.

¹³⁰ Cumberland to Hardwicke, October 21, 1762: Albemarle, I. 134.

¹³¹ Fox had afterwards protested at a meeting of the Cabinet

Except a slight misunderstanding between Fox and Grenville, there were no further difficulties in the Cabinet relative to the Peace. Yet only in appearance could the Ministry be called harmonious. The friction between Grenville and Egremont on the one hand, and Bute on the other, naturally involved the Duke of Bedford, who had already protested against a diminution of his authority ;¹³² and, though the Duke had sided with Bute on the question of Havana, the relations between the two were never again cordial. It was, perhaps, to conciliate this important statesman that Gower was admitted to the *Conciliabulum* ; and Fox, who corresponded with Bedford, also attended the meetings.¹³³ During the last week of October the

against what he suspected was a plan to despatch a squadron after the preliminaries were signed (Fox to Grenville, November 11, 1762), but Grenville assured him that the fleet was intended simply to protect trade (Grenville to Fox, November 11, 1762).—*Grenville Papers*, II. 1–3.

¹³² Bedford was suspicious of the negotiation carried on through Viri, and quarrelled with Egremont on that account. On the 26th of October Rigby set out for Paris apparently to pacify him.—Jones to Newcastle, October 27, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32944, f. 93. Fox tried to encourage him by pointing out that Grenville, being removed from his position at the Foreign Office, ‘would no longer have it in his power to guide and underline Lord Egremont’s drafts.’ Grenville had become unpopular with the Ministry (as well as Bedford) by trying to deter his colleagues from granting France too many concessions.

¹³³ Fox to Bedford, October 26, 1762. Fox seems to have thought of other members of the old Cumberland crowd. ‘If,’ he writes, ‘the Duke of Rutland’s behaviour warrants it

final orders on the Peace were to be drawn up, and the King sent through Egremont a particular request that the Duke of Devonshire should attend the meeting.¹³⁴

There is little reason to believe that the King had a covert design in his summons to the Lord Chamberlain, and the reply which the latter returned (that he begged to be excused, being ignorant of what had happened concerning the Peace, and hence was unable to give an opinion¹³⁵) was not very likely to impress His Majesty. Devonshire, perhaps fearful of misrepresentation, went to Court to request an audience; but the King sent word through a page that he would not see him, and the Duke accordingly delivered his staff to Egremont.¹³⁶ A few days later the King called for his council-book and struck Devonshire's name off the list.¹³⁷ The proscription of the Whigs had begun.

Fox was in a difficult position in the matter. On the one hand he was a strong personal friend of Devonshire, while, on the other, he was the active lieutenant of His Majesty and the Earl of Bute.

let him be summoned to the *Conciliabulum*.—Fox to Bute, November 4, 1762: Fitzmaurice, I. 177.

¹³⁴ Newcastle to Granby, October 24, 1762: Add. MSS., 32944, f. 128.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Newcastle to Rockingham, October 28, 1762: ibid., f. 112.

¹³⁷ Newcastle to Granby, November 5, 1762: ibid., f. 266. We may gather what Bute's feelings were from his remark to Shelburne: 'Was ever a punishment so justly adapted to an offence?'—Fitzmaurice, I. 176.

On the 2nd of November, and again on the 9th, he wrote to assure the Duke that he 'neither knew nor had the least suspicion' of the intention to strike His Grace's name from the list of Privy Councillors.¹³⁸ To Bute he said that he regarded the King's act as a 'personal insult to himself',¹³⁹ and complained that a matter of that sort should have been previously debated.¹⁴⁰ Devonshire, being a sensible man and knowing Fox, probably accepted the explanation; but before receiving his friend's communication he had given Newcastle the impression that he blamed Fox as well as others, and suspected that the Paymaster had been piqued by a letter which he (Devonshire) had written him, rebuking him for his alliance with the Court.¹⁴¹ Hardwicke now declared that Devonshire had coloured his account of this letter. 'I daresay,' remarked the Earl drily, 'that his old friend, Fox, did not keep his secret.'¹⁴²

Meanwhile that other disappointed Duke, who had once been such a power in the State, determined at last that it was time for himself and his faithful following to strike a blow in return. Lord George Cavendish had already resigned his

¹³⁸ Note by Le Marchand in Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 159.

¹³⁹ Bute to Shelburne, November 3, 1762: Fitzmaurice, I. 176.

¹⁴⁰ Shelburne to Bute, November 4, 1762: *ibid.* I. 177.

¹⁴¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 1, 1762: Add. MSS., 32944, f. 185.

¹⁴² Hardwicke to Newcastle, November 2, 1762: *ibid.*, f. 206.

employment because of the indignity to his brother, and his excuses to the Sovereign had been but coldly received.¹⁴³ Newcastle was desirous that the affront to Devonshire should be regarded as intentionally directed against the party as a whole, and was consequently much offended at the Earl of Kinnoul (formerly Lord Dupplin) when he resigned his office from avowed loyalty to Devonshire.¹⁴⁴ A few peers, notably Barrington, refused to comply with the Duke's wish ;¹⁴⁵ and even the Duke's own nephew, Lord Lincoln, was said—although accounts differed—to have resigned his employment only on the plea of relationship and with very bad grace.¹⁴⁶ Newcastle was successful, however, in persuading several lords to retire from His Majesty's service, and the action was sufficiently pronounced to be construed as a counter-move against the Court.

But the Duke thought for a time of going further. He had allied himself strongly with the Duke of Cumberland and he had hopes of securing Pitt for the cause. What should hinder him then from forming an opposition and plotting the overthrow of the man who had broken his long lease of power ? ' If we show spirit now,' he wrote to Rockingham,

¹⁴³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 1, 1762.

¹⁴⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 13, 1762 : *ibid.*, f. 352 ; Fox to Bedford, November 12, 1762 : *Bedford Corres.* III. 153.

¹⁴⁵ Mahon, *Hist. of Eng.*, IV. 275.

¹⁴⁶ Account of what passed this day with the Duke at Windsor Lodge, November 2, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32944, f. 206.

'and *have a system*, these gentlemen cannot go on.'¹⁴⁷ The report that the whole power of the Administration was to be relegated to Fox seemed only to increase his indignation.¹⁴⁸ Then came the Paymaster's offer of the Spanish Embassy to Sandwich, who probably omitted this time to consult Cumberland, whereupon the latter declared angrily to Newcastle that the appointment was intended to imply a connexion between himself and Fox.¹⁴⁹

Shortly after this, Pitt, having responded to overtures, enjoyed an audience with His Royal Highness, and consented (if such a thing should ever become possible) to return to power with Newcastle ; he seemed to count on the support of the Tories whom he had won over in 1756, and out of deference to them had consented to be absent on the first day of the session.¹⁵⁰ The ex-Secretary was consequently much chagrined when he found that he was reaping the fruit of his ignorance in practical politics ; he had not rewarded these faithful followers, and now they turned a deaf ear.¹⁵¹ With

¹⁴⁷ Newcastle to Rockingham, October 31, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32944, f. 176.

¹⁴⁸ Newcastle to Legge, November 2, 1762 : ibid., f. 223.

¹⁴⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 15, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32945, f. 25. To Bedford Fox wrote (November 12), 'The King is pleased with the manner of his (Sandwich's) coming to him. I wish H.R.H. may not be as much displeased. I fear he is extremely so with me.'

¹⁵⁰ Newcastle to Devonshire, November 20, 1762 : ibid., f. 83.

¹⁵¹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, November 27, 1762 : ibid., f. 166.

Mansfield and Stone beyond hope of recovery,¹⁵² Pitt without the least support, and many peers exceedingly lukewarm, Newcastle found that his plan of an opposition was not so easy to execute as he had expected.

The plot, which Newcastle might have made of serious import to the Administration, was finally frustrated by a clever move on the part of his adversaries, probably at Fox's instigation. It appears that one question, which had to be settled by these amateur peacemakers, was the proper formula in which the Peace should be made public; it was, in fact, the question which had been at issue between Bute and Grenville,¹⁵³ and which had long remained undecided. Should the preliminaries be submitted to Parliament before being confirmed by the definitive treaty itself, or should the Peace be finally concluded before the Houses were given the right to discuss it? Fox, consulted as to his opinion, was as greatly perplexed as Bute; he thought that to submit the preliminaries to Parliament would remove many difficulties, but for the members to lose sight of the main scheme by attacking particular articles would be, in his opinion, a serious matter.¹⁵⁴ The final solution was most ingenious. The preliminaries were to be brought before Parliament, but the King should first ratify them under the great seal. When this

¹⁵² Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 29, 1762: Add. MSS., 32945, f. 196.

¹⁵³ Page 254.

¹⁵⁴ Fox to Bute, October 4, 1762: Fitzmaurice, I. 146.

was done, Hardwicke told Newcastle that the national faith was now pledged ; it would be both useless to attack the preliminaries and impossible to 'break' them ; the most that they could hope to do would be to carry a vote of censure, and that, he feared, would alienate Bedford and Halifax, whom he still strangely regarded as friends.¹⁵⁵ Two days later the Duke practically abandoned his thought of an opposition.¹⁵⁶

Bute had no fresh grounds for being discouraged at the outlook, but he was too sensitive a man not to feel his unpopularity, and, when the outcry against the Ministry included stigmas also upon the King, he could scarcely be dissuaded from resigning, though at the moment when his policy seemed likely to achieve its object. To Grenville he declared that he was tired of his office ;¹⁵⁷ and he probably spoke the truth. However remarkable may have been his genius for intrigue, the Earl's executive talents were hardly more than mediocre, and though he could put through a general policy with not a little pertinacity and skill, he seemed utterly hopeless to grapple with entanglements at specific stages, and —more fatal still—he failed completely to win the respect of his colleagues. In short, Bute had risen to the office that he had coveted, his ambition was now glutted, and he wished to retire.

All Bute's hopes hung upon Fox. The Pay-

¹⁵⁵ Hardwicke to Newcastle, November 27, 1762.

¹⁵⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 29, 1762.

¹⁵⁷ Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 488.

master was certainly not the one to secure the great Whig nobles, but there is small probability that he had any wish for them. His designs in fact lay deeper. Yet almost the only man whom his promotion alienated was the erratic Charles Townshend, who vacillated between the Court and the Newcastles for a considerable time, and did not finally tender his resignation until near the middle of December.¹⁵⁸ His place was given soon afterward to Fox's friend, Welbore Ellis—one of the first of his numerous adherents to bask in the sunshine of the new dictatorship.

The Paymaster's policy appears to have been the capture—by threats or corruption—of Newcastle's numerous dependents in Parliament. Such an intention, if carried out, would strike at the heart of the Duke's long-accumulated power. The Tories, he had reason to believe, were practically assured, but it was secession from the ranks of the Whigs that Fox must bring about, if he would carry his work to a successful issue. The unpopularity of the Ministry made his task all the harder. 'If the Administration,' he said, 'carry their business only by a majority of a third, My Lord Bute and the Ministry are gone.'¹⁵⁹ The words are significant, and, indeed, reveal the kernel of his policy. If the preliminaries were approved by only a slight majority, Fox would have fulfilled his own engage-

¹⁵⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 166.

¹⁵⁹ An account of what passed this day at Windsor Lodge, November 2, 1762.

ments, but would the First Lord be in a position to fulfil his? Whatever might befall the Bute Ministry in the course of succeeding years was to him but slight concern, but it was obviously almost necessary to Fox's ambition that the Administration should not collapse immediately after the great test. It was important, too, that the King should be given substantial proof of how thoroughly and admirably he had done his work.

For a time Newcastle refused to persuade himself that his old colleague was working his ruin; and, though Fox repeatedly declared that the Duke's adherents were unfaithful to him, the old veteran in politics would steadfastly deny that such a thing was possible.¹⁶⁰ But as the weeks wore on, the truth was gradually forced upon him that Fox was right. In the latter part of October the first defection had taken place;¹⁶¹ and ever since had Fox been spreading rebellion in the camp. 'He has agents everywhere,' wrote Newcastle to Charles Yorke. 'He knows whom to employ and how to work upon different dispositions and constitutions. . . . My Lord Bute has done ably for his purpose in the choice he has made.'¹⁶² The resignation of Rockingham and others of the Newcastle party gave Fox but little concern; he knew

¹⁶⁰ The boasts of Fox, and the confidence of Newcastle notwithstanding them, are repeatedly shown in the course of the Duke's correspondence.

¹⁶¹ Newcastle to Peachey, October 27, 1762: Add. MSS., 32944, f. 105.

¹⁶² Newcastle to Yorke, October 25, 1762: *ibid.*, f. 18.

that it was votes that would count when the great battle was fought, and the defiance of a few peers was as nothing compared to the pecuniary pressure which the Ministry's agent could exert upon the army of under-placemen. Perhaps the most significant feature of Fox's attitude was the appointment of Sandwich, which virtually defied the Duke of Cumberland, co-leader in this nobleman's confederation. The Paymaster had thrown down the gauntlet.

The methods of Fox were various. Besides pursuing his profitable insinuations to Newcastle placemen, he possessed still a large degree of his old influence over military men, and this largely through his cousin, Calcraft. The latter had been a trusted agent of Fox as far back as the time when the Paymaster had been Secretary-at-War, and so much power had been put into his hands that it has been said he could often make or mar a military career.¹⁶³ Cumberland, in one of his impulses of resentment, had exclaimed to Newcastle, 'That devilish Fox and Calcraft get in everywhere,' and since His Royal Highness had reason to know the inner workings of that system, the assertion was not to be despised. He was particularly apprehensive lest Calcraft would use his subtle arts with the Marquis of Granby, now returning with the troops from Germany; ¹⁶⁴ and the fear was not

¹⁶³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 401.

¹⁶⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 9, 1762 : Albemarle, I. 148.

ill-founded. Fox had written to the Marquis only a few days after he had become Leader of the House, and solicited both the commander's own assistance and that of his friends, a large and prominent group.¹⁶⁵ In the days of Fox's monopoly of patronage it behoved military men as well as civilians to bow their heads to the Peace.

But the 'capture of the army' was merely one feature of Fox's programme. He not only held out tempting employments to men of wealth or influence, but plunged into the most flagrant bribery. With all his venomous bias, there is probably much truth in Walpole's vivid account of the great manager's methods. 'He directly attacked,' he writes, 'the separate members of the House of Commons ; and with so little decorum on the part of either buyer or seller that a shop was publicly opened at the Pay Office, whither the members flocked and received the wages of their venality in bank-bills, even to so low a sum as two hundred pounds for their votes on the Treaty. Twenty-five thousand pounds, as Martin, Secretary of the Treasury, afterwards owned, were issued in one morning ; and in a single fortnight a vast majority was purchased to approve the Peace.'¹⁶⁶ Such barefaced corruption almost passes belief. But the fact is certainly evident that the Court grudged

¹⁶⁵ Fox to Granby, October 15, 1762 : Rutland MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report X, part I, p. 306. Fox's efforts were successful, for Granby came over to the Court.

¹⁶⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 157.

no amount of money to accomplish its end, and that unlimited credit and confidence was given to Fox.¹⁶⁷ When a House of Commons could be shown to be as unscrupulous as this, no astonishment need be felt at the power which the ‘secret-service money’ of Walpole, Pelham, and Newcastle had generated. ‘If Mr. Fox has health,’ declared Sackville, ‘he may give the law.’¹⁶⁸

Parliament opened on the 25th. Neither Fox nor Pitt were present on the opening day, the former standing for re-election because of his new sinecure (the clerkship of the pells) and the latter, both this day and the day following, reputedly suffering from an attack of the gout;¹⁶⁹ though it may be assumed that he would have been absent in any event.¹⁷⁰

On the 30th the preliminaries of peace were laid before the two Houses and discussion commenced

¹⁶⁷ Fox was becoming more and more confident of victory as he neared the coming test of his work. On the 26th he told Rigby that ‘the Opposition will never divide 60’, and he would show him ‘what . . . the Duke of Newcastle’s interest is without the Court’.—Rigby to Bedford, November 26, 1762 : *Bedford Corres.* III. 159.

¹⁶⁸ Sackville to Irwin, October 15, 1762.

¹⁶⁹ Hardwicke mentions an odd circumstance in this connexion. ‘I cannot help telling you,’ he wrote to Newcastle on the 27th, ‘an anecdote or two concerning him (Pitt). Neither he nor Lord Temple were present yesterday, and that was remarked. Your Grace knows as well as I that the former was laid up with the gout. I sent a how d’ye to his house in Jermyn Street this morning to which his porter sent for answer that he was in the country and very well.’—Hardwicke to Newcastle, November 27, 1762.

¹⁷⁰ See p. 263.

the following day. It was then that men first perceived how thoroughly Fox had done his work. A most unreasonable motion to defer consideration until Pitt should be able to attend was defeated by a vote of 213 to 74. It may be as well to note in passing that Shelburne wrote the same night to Bute, 'Before another question comes, let the 213 taste some of the plunder of the 74 ;'¹⁷¹ but Bute had not the courage for so radical a measure at this time, even though Fox himself had already pressed him, as will be mentioned later.

On the 9th of December a committee of the whole House debated the treaty, and Pitt was present this time, though he said very little. Legge promised that he would cavil less than most men, but he could not 'bestow appreciation in the lump'. 'Nothing,' replied Fox, 'can be finished if perfection is insisted on.'¹⁷²

Since the Opposition would not venture a division in the Committee, Harris, a friend of Fox and Ilchester, made the long-awaited motion to approve the preliminaries. Several others rose to criticize or defend, among them Pitt, who ably supported his contention for French exclusion from the fisheries, and, in short, gave the House one of his most eloquent exhibitions. Fox spoke next, partly in reply to Pitt, but his speech was

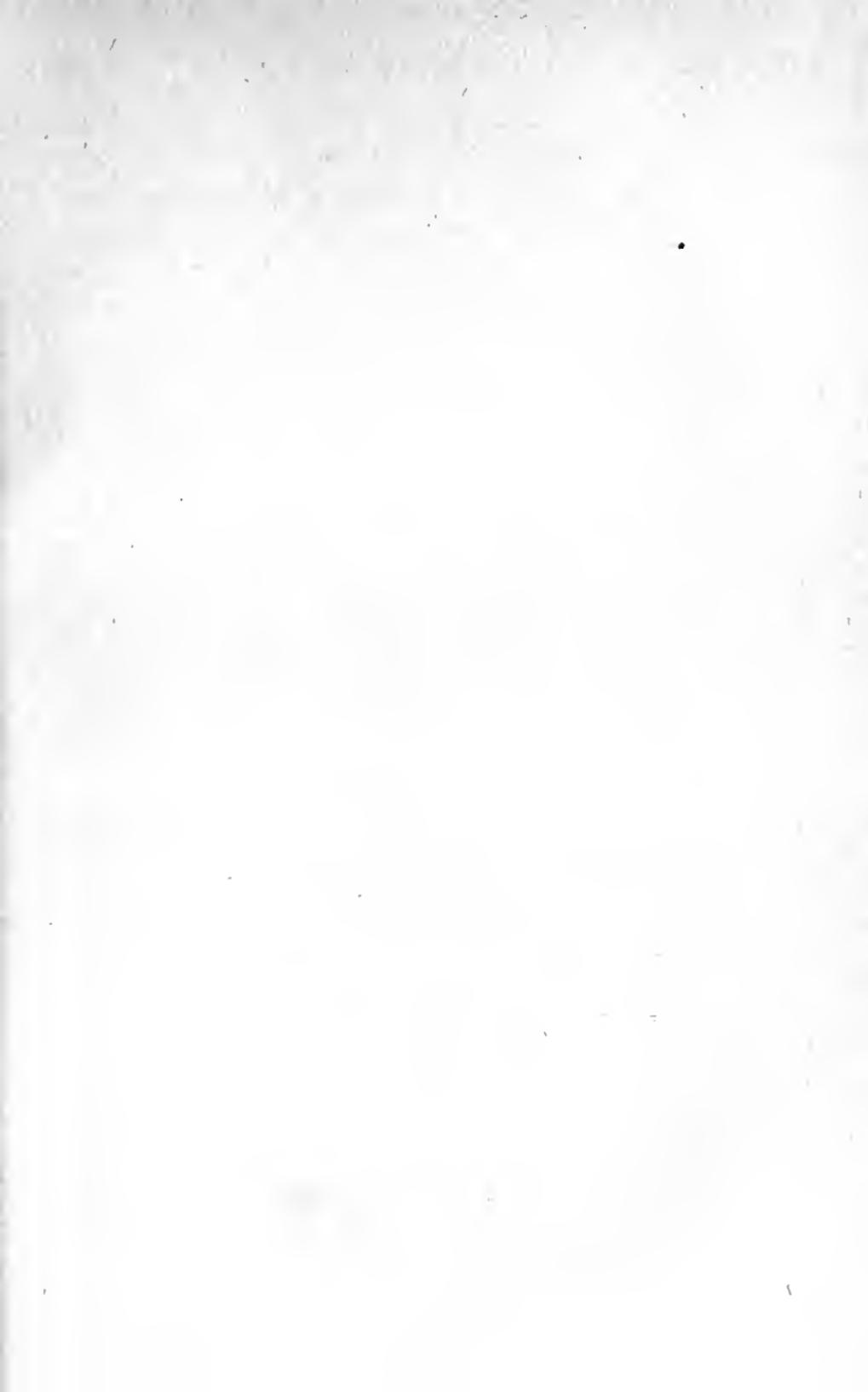
¹⁷¹ Shelburne to Bute, December 1, 1762 : Fitzmaurice, I. 182.

¹⁷² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 177.

not worthy of his powers,¹⁷³ and he confined his attention chiefly to a justification for his own position, begging that all should rally round the Crown, irrespective of party or faction. Pitt had already left the House without voting. When the question was submitted to division, the vote stood 314 against 65 ;¹⁷⁴ and in the Lords there was no

¹⁷³ It is quite possible that Fox's health may account for his poor showing, particularly as his canvassing must have considerably fatigued him. Walpole, writing on the 30th, had said, 'As wishing well to Mr. Fox, I cannot but be sorry he has undertaken his new province, to which his health is by no means equal. I should think the probability of his death must alarm the Court, who owe their present security entirely to him, and would not meet with much quarter from Mr. Pitt, the Duke of Devonshire, or the greater Duke.'—Walpole to Mann, November 30, 1762: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, V. 278.

¹⁷⁴ 'The Ministers,' writes Walpole, 'ordered that the numbers on the question should be printed—had they printed the names too, the world would have known the names of the sixty-five that were not bribed.' So sweeping an insinuation must of course be instantly qualified. There were many men—and not unpatriotic men—who were quite glad to vote for the Peace in the hope of ending a long-protracted war. It is also worthy of mention that a reviewer of Walpole's *Memoirs* has exposed their author very cleverly. It seems that Fox had at his disposal a sinecure which he was willing to bestow on Walpole's nephew, Lord Orford, on condition that they both voted for the Peace. Fox frankly acknowledged it as a 'bribe' in the letter which he wrote to Walpole, and which the latter gives us in his *Memoirs*. But Walpole showed no indignation in his answer to Fox, merely pleading his disinterestedness as his reason for declining. Nevertheless when the time came, Lord Orford accepted the sinecure, and both he and Walpole voted for the Peace. In other words—as the reviewer expresses it—they 'accepted Fox's bribe'.—*Quarterly Review*, vol. lxxvii. pp. 265–6.



division at all. It was a great and marvellous triumph for the Court, the Bute Ministry, and Henry Fox.

It might, indeed, be called a personal victory for Fox. The Peace may not have been as unpopular as was supposed ; it may have been thought by some that rejection after ratification would be an affront to the King ; but be that as it may, the stupendous figures may be justly considered the work of Fox. He may in truth have *saved* the Peace. He certainly fulfilled his intention of acquiring a huge majority in support of the Ministry. Bute had, as Newcastle said, 'chosen ably'.

The terms need no recapitulation here ; the chief ones to be noted are the concessions that were made by each side. France gave up Minorca and Hanover to England and evacuated Cleves, Wesel, and Gueldres which were at once occupied by the King of Prussia's troops. England ceded Havana to Spain, in return for Florida, and to France she gave back Guadeloupe, Martinique, Marie-galante, St. Lucia, Goree and Belle Isle, and certain conquests in India. All other conquests Great Britain retained, except the port of Manila, which had fallen to an English squadron during the month of September, and must of necessity be returned according to the wording of the preliminaries. Finally, the fishery question was settled in favour of France (with some new advantages), while England, on the other hand, secured

the usual stipulation respecting Dunkirk. Such was the Peace which Lord Granville, one of the most active minds in his age, declared on his death-bed to be ‘the most honourable this nation ever knew’. Yet one must wonder a little at his words. It was not an exceedingly bad Peace, not by any means a ‘capitulation’, as was frequently said afterwards; but the terms were hardly commensurate to the glory achieved by the British arms, and the utter blindness of the Ministers to anything but the simple object of ending the war had had the natural result of rendering them wax in the hands of Choiseul, who gained some concessions he could hardly with reason have expected. The whole affair presents a lesson in the political unwisdom of attempting to tyrannize over a conservative cabinet and a desperate foe. If, in fact, we consider the many diplomatic efforts to bring this war to an end, and its wearisome protraction because a victorious minister was bent on extracting the uttermost farthing, there is reason in the view that some bending on the part of England was an obligation to humanity, and as such an honour to the British nation.

Upon Newcastle the result descended as a crushing blow. ‘Your Lordship,’ he wrote to Hardwicke, ‘will easily imagine that the contemptible figure we make and myself more particularly in both Houses goes to my heart, and I don’t see my way out of it. I must either abandon the few friends I have or leave them to themselves. It is

but too true what Mr. Fox said, . . . " My Lord Bute has got over all of the Duke of Newcastle's friends." ¹⁷⁵ Several days previously the veteran politician had revived for a moment his thought of an opposition, and Legge had reluctantly consented to lead the forces in the Lower House,¹⁷⁶ but the project was soon abandoned from its hopelessness, and Pitt now refused to consider a junction with him.¹⁷⁷ It was in fact the Duke's lot to fall still lower.

Triumphant and, as Shelburne implies,¹⁷⁸ intoxicated with his victory, Fox turned to annihilate his enemies. The opportunity was great ; he might never have a like one again ; and his position had made him in some respects practically a dictator. Even before the preliminaries were approved, but while he was in anticipation of certain victory, he had written to Bute, ' Strip the Duke of Newcastle of his three lieutenancies immediately. I'll answer for the good effect of it, and then go to the *general rout*, but let this beginning be made immediately.' ¹⁷⁹ Such was the defiant attitude of one who knew that he had shattered the Newcastle power beyond hope of retrieval. But Bute had not shared his

¹⁷⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 14, 1762 : Albermarle, I. 152.

¹⁷⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 12, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32945, f. 280.

¹⁷⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 25, 1762 : *ibid.*, f. 362.

¹⁷⁸ Memorandum by Shelburne.—Fitzmaurice, I. 183.

¹⁷⁹ Fox to Bute, November 1762 : *ibid.*, I. 179.

ally's confidence, and he was too cautious to venture upon an immediate 'rout' before his great policy had received its vindication. So it was not until the 23rd of December that Halifax notified the Duke that His Majesty had dismissed him from his lieutenancies as well as the Stewardship of Sherwood Forest.¹⁸⁰ The same day the Marquis of Rockingham and the Duke of Grafton, members of the same party, were removed from their respective lieutenancies,¹⁸¹ but no further affront was given to the Duke of Devonshire, since Fox (and not the King) was now in command.¹⁸²

Great was Newcastle's grief and resentment. To Hardwicke he wrote in much indignation, because the latter's sons had refrained from voting against the Peace¹⁸³ (thereby saving their places), and to Devonshire he declared that his old friend was 'lame' in his excuses for them.¹⁸⁴ He, likewise,

¹⁸⁰ Halifax to Newcastle, December 23, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32945, f. 331.

¹⁸¹ Newcastle to Onslow, December 27, 1762 : *ibid.*, f. 406.

¹⁸² 'Mr. Fox,' wrote Newcastle, 'made it his earnest wish to the King that the Duke of Devonshire might be spared.'—Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 1, 1763 : Add. MSS., 32946, f. 10.

¹⁸³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 19, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32945, f. 312. To Hardwicke he held the failure of the Yorkes to vote against the Peace as the main reason for the failure of his plan of a concerted opposition to Bute. He also spoke of Mansfield's defection. 'What I never could think,' he added, 'Your Lordship's family and every one under their influence in the House of Commons leaving me at last. This exposes me to contempt and my friends to starve.'—*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Newcastle to Devonshire, December 23, 1762: *ibid.*, f. 335.

endeavoured to impress upon Devonshire the duty of resigning his lieutenancy, that he might be put on the same scale of misery with his friends. As for himself the old Duke declared that it was determined to 'extirpate him out of the earth'.¹⁸⁵

Nothing but revenge could have instigated this proscription of the nobles, but the persecution of placemen, who were not in sympathy with the Administration, has some basis in precedent, though never so wide an application. Fox had not allowed his designs against a few peers to interfere with his policy of a 'general rout'. On the 13th he led Rigby to believe that there would be a 'general *déroute* from the Duke of Grafton's lieutenancy of the County of Suffolk to the underlings in the post-office'.¹⁸⁶ Respecting the noble class we have noted the measures pursued; and the campaign against the office-holders had already commenced. 'To-day,' wrote Walpole on the 20th of December, 'has been execution day. Great havoc is made amongst the Duke of Newcastle's friends, who are turned out down to the lowest offices; '¹⁸⁷ before many weeks had elapsed the number 'executed' had risen to forty,¹⁸⁸ and

¹⁸⁵ Newcastle to Granby, January 24, 1763: Add. MSS., 32946, f. 237.

¹⁸⁶ Rigby to Bedford, December 13, 1762: *Bedford Corres.* III. 169.

¹⁸⁷ Walpole to Mann, December 20, 1762: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, V. 283.

¹⁸⁸ List (undated), Add. MSS., 32996, f. 179.

Gower told Newcastle that every custom-house officer in Sussex would be turned out down to offices of £50 a year.¹⁸⁹ Nor did Fox stop there; but he visited his wrath even upon the relations of his enemies, and the case is cited of a nephew of Legge (a boy at school) who was deprived of a place yielding £200 a year.¹⁹⁰ Revenge of such a character seems petty, but Fox had evidently intended to do his work thoroughly, and his ultimate aim was successful. The Whig Party was overthrown.

In general Bute seems to have given Fox *carte blanche* in this inquisition; yet the fact that the Paymaster had pressed in vain for the removal of two of the Yorkes¹⁹¹ probably indicated a hesitation on the part of the First Lord to alienate the Bench. Besides, Lord Royston and Charles Yorke had purposely refrained from voting upon the Peace, and it was possibly for that reason that Fox had omitted their names when he urged the removal of their brothers. Save in this one case there seems to have been no restriction.

The reason for Fox's radical measures is harder perhaps to analyse than anything in his career. He had good reason to dislike Newcastle, but hardly enough to wreak such extreme vengeance. Moreover the removal of many who had accepted

¹⁸⁹ Newcastle to Devonshire, December 23, 1762.

¹⁹⁰ The statement is on Walpole's unsupported authority.—*Memoirs of George III*, I. 187.

¹⁹¹ Memorandum by Fox, Fitzmaurice, I. 193.

places from the Duke, in no way connected with the House of Commons, seems to display a bitterness that is hard to reconcile with Fox's normal good humour ; and one wonders if there was not a slight tinge of cruelty in his nature, as displayed long before in his persecution of Murray. But excepting these extreme measures, his conduct is not difficult to explain. Despising Newcastle as he did, and knowing that the Duke's power was entirely derived from his long patronage of place-men, he determined to root it out so effectually that the incompetent man might never again cherish the hope of governing the State. Fox had no further ambition for himself beyond the peerage he was certain to obtain. Hence the 'massacre' of the Whigs gave him neither concern nor anxiety. Excluded from power in 1757 by both Newcastle and Pitt, he was now at last enjoying his hour of triumph. Indeed it was said that Bute himself would have found difficulty in removing him, so firmly had he become established in the Administration ;¹⁹² but the First Lord had no objection to the decimation of his enemies, and he was short-sighted enough to believe that the 'King's Friends' were unconquerable. Thus Sulla confronted no obstacles in his proscription and he revelled in his pastime much as his royal friend, the 'Butcher', had revelled in the blood of Scottish chieftains after Culloden.

¹⁹² Walpole to Mann, February 28, 1763 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, V. 288.

But Fox was not disposed to confine himself to enemies outside the Administration. There were certain persons in the Ministry itself who had won his enmity. Such, in fact, were Halifax, Egremont and Grenville. The first of these, he believed, was over-ambitious and secretly unfaithful, especially when a chance to court Newcastle should present itself. ‘Insincere,’ he pronounced him, ‘regardless of his word to a supreme degree, and regardful only of what may serve his vanity and ambition, which are without bounds.’ Egremont, Fox objected to on the ground of his quarrel with Bedford—an event which he attributed to the influence of Mansfield, who governed the Earl through Grenville. But the latter was the man whom Fox most detested of the three and he declared that Grenville had ‘neither good sense, good nature nor honesty’. Dashwood was, in Fox’s opinion, honest and sincere, but ill-fitted to his position (a criticism undoubtedly true), and the Paymaster suggested that Oswald should be appointed to succeed him ;¹⁹³ but he made no further recommendations. The proposal to expel the strongest members of the Administration shows how little Fox really cared for the ultimate destination of the ship which he had piloted.

Fox himself was eager to retire as soon as he had satisfied his desire for revenge. He had placed as many of his friends in power as he could, and when

¹⁹³ Memorandum by Fox ‘at Lord Bute’s desire’, March 11, 1763, Fitzmaurice, I. 186.

the Tories began to be fearful of his growing influence,¹⁹⁴ it was evident that the time had come for him to part from the confederate whose attitude toward him had been uniformly friendly.¹⁹⁵ Added to this, his health had been of late years much broken, and he yearned for the comforts of his long retirement. In January he wrote to the First Lord, stating his desire to relinquish active work ;¹⁹⁶ but although Bute knew that Fox had expected only to see the Ministry through the trying ordeal of the Peace, he was apparently too apprehensive of danger to trust himself alone without the Paymaster's judgement.¹⁹⁷

In February the Ministry met with unexpected troubles in the Commons. Dashwood's cider tax, though put through without difficulty, was so unpopular as to raise the storm against Bute with redoubled force. An attempt was also made to bring on an examination of the public expenses—an expedient which chiefly concerned the Pay-

¹⁹⁴ Newcastle to Devonshire, December 23, 1762.

¹⁹⁵ In December Hardwicke heard gossip to the effect that Bute was extremely jealous of Fox, and that 'a breach was very near impending'.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 28, 1762 : Add. MSS., 32945, f. 410. There is nothing, however, in the correspondence of the two men (as given us by Lord Fitzmaurice) to lead us to suppose that the story is true, and it may reasonably be doubted.

¹⁹⁶ Fox to Bute, January 1763 : Fitzmaurice, I. 185.

¹⁹⁷ Devonshire probably expressed the truth when he declared that Bute doubted his ability to carry on the administration when Fox 'was, by coming up to the House of Lords, to have no share in it'.

master, who warmly opposed the measure, not, as he said, because he disapproved of inquiries, but on the ground that the attendance of the commissaries would be required, and they could be ill-spared from the task of ‘liquidating in Germany those very accounts’.¹⁹⁸ The proposal was accordingly dropped. Meanwhile the definitive Treaty of Paris had been signed, followed by that of Hubertsburg between Prussia and Austria, and the Seven Years’ War was thus brought to a close.

In March Bute thought seriously of retiring ; but Fox tried earnestly to dissuade him¹⁹⁹ and was partially successful inasmuch as the First Lord did not execute his resolution immediately. So far as formidable opposition was concerned, Bute had no reason to fear downfall, and although he had fallen out with Bedford, an overture to that quarter from Newcastle had been decisively repulsed,²⁰⁰ and Pitt still refused to act with his old colleague.²⁰¹

But the fact must become evident that the Bute

¹⁹⁸ Notes by West, February 11, 1763 : Add. MSS., 32946, f. 58.

¹⁹⁹ Fox to Bute, March 11, 1763, Fitzmaurice, I. 186. It is improbable that Fox was instigated by anything beyond a natural interest in the Ministry which had given him a power so considerable. Both his ill-health and the fact that he had won his desired peerage are reasons for doubting that he was meditating a ‘system’.

²⁰⁰ Message from Rigby, February 3, 1763 : Add. MSS., 32946, f. 307.

²⁰¹ Devonshire to Newcastle, February 17, 1763 : Add. MSS., 32947, f. 21.

Administration had accomplished its work and merited no longer continuance in office. Bute seemed to regard the man whose 'magic' had saved the Peace of Paris as the only source of strength for himself, and when Fox became determined to retire, there seemed nothing tangible on which to depend, and there was no one for him to magnetize, because the ability was not in him. 'The ground I tread upon,' he said to a friend, 'is so hollow that I am afraid not only of falling myself but of involving my Royal Master in my ruin. It is time for me to retire.'²⁰² Such was probably an exact statement of the case. Personal timidity has been charged against him, but he could hardly have feared impeachment with the power of the Crown behind him, and his ambition being sated, what indeed had he to fear for his career? No doubt Bute was tired of being the most thoroughly detested minister since Stuart days, and being, unlike Newcastle, aware of his own defects, he could see that his Administration would never be able to live down its unpopularity.

Since, however, the King must not be hopelessly deserted in a crisis, Bute cast about for a successor, and naturally turned first to Fox. The Paymaster was tempted by the offer (tendered through

²⁰² Adolphus, I. 126. Devonshire wrote to Newcastle his belief that Bute's retirement was caused by Fox's determination to retire to the House of Lords,—that is, to abandon the management of the Commons.—Devonshire to Newcastle, April 9, 1763 : Add. MSS., 32948, f. 86. See above, note 197.

Calcraft), and but for the attitude of Lady Holland, who felt that his health would not justify it, he would probably have accepted the promotion.²⁰³ To crown his career by filling an office to which even Pitt had not attained, and for which his own talent in business was so peculiarly fitted, was not without reason a temptation. But Fox declined, and perhaps, in view of his unpopularity, the decision was wise. A few days later he wrote to Bute, expressing his concern that His Lordship was still resolved to retire, and despite numerous objections, recommended Grenville as the fittest to succeed to the chief office.²⁰⁴ The plan was accepted, and on the 8th of April, to the surprise of most of the world and to the great disappointment of the King, Bute resigned from the Treasury.

But our study of this important Ministry cannot end without an account of its final throes, and a dispute had meanwhile arisen which was carried to lengths out of all proportion to its importance. When Fox had accepted the Leadership of the

²⁰³ Calcraft to Shelburne, March 15, 1762 : Fitzmaurice, I. 194.

²⁰⁴ 'Upon the whole,' wrote Fox, 'and especially knowing Lord Bute's good opinion, I very reluctantly (I can hardly bring myself to it) give the preference to Mr. Grenville.'—Fox to Bute, March 17, 1763 : Fitzmaurice, I. 196. Hardwicke's estimate of the in-coming administration is worthy of note. 'Every one,' he wrote, 'thinks the arrangement can't last a month. It puts me in mind of Mr. Fox's Administration formed in 1757, which was also the work of an Easter holidays (*sic*) but could never be launched.'—Hardwicke to Newcastle, April 8, 1763 : Add. MSS., 32948, f. 54.

Commons, he thought at first of retiring from the Pay Office, perhaps because he believed that he would incur odium enough in putting through the Peace without the additional stigma of handling the Paymaster's balances.²⁰⁵ But brief reflection changed his mind and he decided that not only was he less abused by the public than he had usually been, but that the resignation of his employment might be taken to indicate a feint by which bolder designs could be shielded.²⁰⁶ There is no evidence as yet on record to show that Fox had told the agent for the Ministry that he would retire, although it is very evident that Shelburne assumed it, and on what ground we cannot say. At all events both the King and Bute had believed Shelburne's report—or at any rate took care not to investigate the matter—and Calcraft had been in a measure responsible for the false impression.²⁰⁷

Fox was highly indignant at the unjust assumption and resolved to tell the King that he 'never had a thought of resigning';²⁰⁸ to Shelburne he said that he was '*determined*' to keep the Pay Office and become a peer as well;²⁰⁹ whereupon Calcraft seems to have affected a pious indignation, and, although his enormous wealth had been entirely

²⁰⁵ Fox to Nicholl, October 18, 1763: Fitzmaurice, I. 166.

²⁰⁶ Fox to Nicholl (undated), *ibid.* It occurred to him that it would lend credence to the charge already made that he had amassed 'a great sum of money for making the Peace'.

²⁰⁷ Calcraft to Shelburne, March 22, 1763: *ibid.* I. 217.

²⁰⁸ Shelburne to Bute, March 1763: *ibid.* I. 199.

²⁰⁹ Shelburne to Bute, March 25, 1763: *ibid.*

due to opportunities contrived by Fox's interest in his career, he was now so mean and ungrateful as to declare himself entirely in accord with Shelburne—even to the extent of offering to resign his position at the Pay Office, if such defiance were thought advisable.²¹⁰

Fox soon came to consider the advisability of resigning at once and remaining in the Commons.²¹¹ Such a threat was assuredly a shrewd ruse on his part, for, besides the ridicule which the Crown would incur by quarrelling with its most valued supporter, there would be the additional unpleasantness of a discontented ex-Minister in the House of Commons. Probably with this plan in view he sought and obtained an interview with Bute, which apparently ended unsatisfactorily; and a few days later he clearly defined his position in a letter to the First Lord. ‘I will begin,’ he wrote, ‘with that frankness which I think Your Lordship has been wanting in towards me. You have seen me often since you had been informed that I intended to resign my place at the end of the session, which I vow to God I never thought of doing, and Your Lordship has never mentioned it to me or given me the most distant hint. Surely My Lord, I had a right to be talked to upon my own business before the King had formed a notion of my intention. You heard it from several other friends of mine as well as from Lord Shelburne.

²¹⁰ Calcraft to Shelburne, March 15, 1763: Fitzmaurice, I. 201.

²¹¹ Fox to Nicholl, April 10, 1763: *ibid.* I. 210.

It would have been kind to have mentioned it to me the next visit after you first heard of it. You would then have known how much you was misinformed.²¹² This was certainly reasonable. One can hardly admire Fox (except on a point of dignity) for thus wrangling over a continued enjoyment of the Pay Office, but there is no excuse for Shelburne's deliberate assumption that he had agreed to give it up. On the contrary Fox had every reason to remain, since he was undertaking a most arduous business, on the stipulation of becoming a peer, but if compelled thereby to give up the Pay Office, the promised reward for his services would be virtually no reward at all. The question should have been thoroughly discussed and settled at the time the bargain was made between the two parties ; and hence the Paymaster was right in holding Shelburne responsible for the indignity. For the present, all the consolation he gained was proclaiming the late negotiator 'a perfidious and infamous liar'.²¹³

Throughout the affair Bute displayed much tact, and even though he acknowledged his duplicity (in purposely neglecting an important point), he succeeded eventually in retaining Fox's good will.²¹⁴ In one of his interviews with Bute, the

²¹² Fox to Bute, March 27, 1763: Fitzmaurice, I. 212. Of course officially, Fox 'never thought of resigning', but the actual statement is certainly a lie—though one which neither Bute nor the King could regard as such.

²¹³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 203.

²¹⁴ Note by Vassall Holland, *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 79.

latter is said to have excused Shelburne on the plea of the supreme necessity which they had felt of acquiring Fox's support for the promotion of the Peace, and chose to call it a 'pious fraud'. 'I see the fraud well enough, my Lord,' replied the Paymaster, 'but where is the piety ?'

Vexed by his treatment, and eager to secure himself against the ridicule which his countless enemies would fling at him, if he were forced to resign, Fox seems to have lost his head entirely. At one time he offered to take the Treasury²¹⁵ (this was after he had already refused it); at another he wrote of desiring the Privy Seal;²¹⁶ but throughout the struggle he held consistently to his threat of resigning without delay, and this apparently had its effect in the audience which Fox obtained of the King on the 28th. Shortly after his retirement Bute wrote to Fox a polite letter in the third person inquiring the name by which he wished his barony to be known, and concluding with these words: 'Whenever Mr. Fox wishes to quit the office he now holds and points to any other, the essential services he has rendered His Majesty entitle him, in Lord Bute's opinion, to meet with the most gracious reception, and to

²¹⁵ Calcraft to Shelburne, March 22, 1763: Fitzmaurice, I. 217.

²¹⁶ Fox to Bute, April 12, 1763: *ibid.* I. 224. Fox even carried his mad haggling to such an extent as to demand a viscountcy instead of a barony—for the purpose apparently of enjoying precedence over Pitt's wife.—Fox to Bute, March 31, 1763: *ibid.* I. 223.

have great attention paid to any request he shall make.'²¹⁷

The controversy thus ended with Fox at the Pay Office ; and a matter of very slight importance had been magnified to a degree unworthy of the King by the treachery or stupidity of Shelburne and Calcraft. Bute's attitude seems to have been one of polite indifference and lukewarm gratitude, while Fox, with right on his side, had hurt his own cause by foolish and undignified demands. But the most grievous feature of the unfortunate struggle, so far as the Paymaster is concerned, was the attitude of Rigby, who had been for nearly twenty years one of Fox's most intimate friends. 'The man he most loved,' writes Walpole, 'was Rigby, and though he had not crammed him with wealth in the same lavish guise with which he had enriched Calcraft, he had assisted in Rigby's promotions, and wished to push him forwards, and be strictly connected with him in every political walk. In the height of the quarrel with Shelburne and Calcraft, Fox, walking along St. James's Street, met and stopped Rigby's chariot, and leaning on the door of it began to vent his complaints, when the other, unprovoked and unconcerned in the dispute, interrupted him with these stinging words, " You tell your story to Shelburne ; he has a damned one to tell of you ; I do not trouble myself which is the truth,"—and pushing him aside ordered his coachman to drive

²¹⁷ Bute to Fox, April, 1763 : Fitzmaurice, I. 225.

away.'²¹⁸ Unfalteringly loyal in his own friendships, Fox never forgot this cruel injury. Again and again he refers to it in the course of succeeding years ; for pride, no less than affection, had been mangled by this blow. 'Had it been a political friend only,' he wrote, 'I should be ashamed to be hurt by it ; no politics will or can mortify me. I thought this man's friendship had not been only political.—I loved him ; and whether to feel or not to feel, to despise or grieve on such an occasion, be most worthy of a man, I won't dispute ; but the fact is that I have been, and still am, whenever I think of it, very unhappy.'²¹⁹ Enough cause had Fox to be 'unhappy', for now that all his influence had ceased, the motives of his henchmen stood revealed. It seemed in 1763 as though the Paymaster's enemies were legion. Unpopularity with the great politicians he earned from the fullness of his revenge; the hatred of the people he had earned in virtue, very largely, of his contempt for them ; but Fox was ever thoughtful—even beyond the bounds of discretion—of his personal and political friends, and such treachery as Rigby's shows the selfish, sordid character of the politics of his age.

On the 19th of April Fox took his seat in the House of Peers as Lord Holland.²²⁰ The active career of the brilliant manager was now permanently at an end.

²¹⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 208.

²¹⁹ Holland to Selwyn, October 5, 1763 : Jesse, *George Selwyn and his Contemporaries*, I. 267.

²²⁰ *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 78.

CHAPTER XI

THE POLITICIAN, AND THE MAN

WITH the conferment of the barony and the passage of the Peace of Paris the subject of this work properly ends. The task which Holland accomplished for the Bute Ministry marks his last notable appearance in the arena of English politics. Henceforth his life was as tranquil and obscure as a vindictive public spirit would permit.

In the spring of 1763 the new peer began his well-earned rest by a journey to Paris, which he had not visited since the days of his youth, and where he now became such an active figure in French society that the gossips said he wished to become the British ambassador.¹ His stay, however, was comparatively short, as he had promised Lord Sandwich to be present at the opening of Parliament in November.² But the presentiment that he would 'in effect be First Minister'³ in the new Administration was probably based on the belief that one who had recently been so powerful could not but remain so. We have no record of any speech that he ever made in the Upper House,

¹ *Letters of Horace Walpole*, V. 367, VI. 100.

² *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 133 n.

³ Phillipmore, *Lyttelton*, II. 643.

and no reason to suppose that he did more than flatter a little the men upon whose good graces might depend his retention of the Pay Office.⁴ Even his later pursuit of an earldom could not lure him again into active politics. Holland's withdrawal to the House of Lords seals his abandonment of the sphere to which his tastes and talents belong ; and, the step once taken, he had no misgivings on the subject, and no lingering ambition for the rôle which he had played so long. ‘It was to cut that up by the roots,’ he wrote to Selwyn, ‘and with that intention, and after deliberation with that intention, that I did it ; and Lady Caroline and I find great reason now to be glad that it was done.’⁵ Such is the plain statement of the man who had already tasted his share of the cup of bitterness.

But if Holland lacked power and an enviable reputation, he still had the opulence which his calculating mind had long ago foreseen. Of the various methods and steps by which he built up his fortune no satisfactory account can here be given, for as yet we have little evidence beyond the occasional references of contemporaries, and no chance of determining to what height his vast wealth attained. The salary of the Paymaster-General was £3,000, not including the sums allowed him for defraying the expenses entailed by his office ; but this salary was of no moment compared

⁴ *Grenville Papers*, II. 208, 220, 241.

⁵ Holland to Selwyn, October 5, 1763 : Jesse, *George Selwyn and his Contemporaries*, I. 267.

to the money which such an official could make by judicious speculation with the sums in his possession. ‘The larger and more numerous the subsidies,’ writes Walpole, ‘the more troops (there) are in commission, the more (there) are on service abroad, the ampler means has the Paymaster of enriching himself.’⁶ Holland, as Shelburne says, ‘took advantage of the rise and fall of the public stocks, and whereas the Government lost nothing thereby, the Paymaster gained enormously.’⁷ Not only do we know that the interest derived from the sums at the Pay Office was the legitimate perquisite of the Paymaster, but some autobiographical evidence gives us a glimpse of Holland’s shrewd manner of speculating with the funds at his disposal. ‘The sudden and great rise of stocks,’ he writes, ‘has made me richer than ever I desired or intended to be. Obloquy generally attends money so got, but with how much reason in all cases let this simple account of my gains show. The Government borrows money at 20 % discount. I am not consulted or concerned in making the bargain. I have as Paymaster great sums in my hands, which, not applicable to any present use, must either lie dead in the banks or be employed by me. I lend this to the Government in 1761. A peace is thought certain. I am not in the least convinced, but my bad opinion of Mr. Pitt makes me think it will not be concluded. I sell out and

⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 348.

⁷ Fitzmaurice, *Shelburne*, I. 173.

gain greatly. If anybody should say I advised a peace, let it be considered that that was in November last ; I had no money in the funds then, and indeed thought my advice would not be taken, nor was it.⁸ We need not deal with Holland's excuses, or the obligations of his stewardship ; but a man is indeed callous who knowingly makes his money in a way which 'obloquy generally attends'.

Sir George Trevelyan gives us an estimate of the fortune which Holland bequeathed : 'He left Lady Holland two thousand a year, Holland House,⁹ and government securities to the amount, it is said, of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds. To Stephen Fox he had already given between four and five thousand a year in land. To Charles he bequeathed the property in Kent,¹⁰ and nine hundred a year ; while the young men got amongst them fifty thousand pounds in money, and a sinecure valued at twenty-three hundred a year.'¹¹ But all this gives us little notion of Holland's average income or the capital value of his wealth, since his income obviously varied considerably, and he spent his money with a lavish hand. Besides buying

⁸ Fox's Memoirs, *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, pp. 72–3.

⁹ Holland House passed naturally to Stephen on his mother's decease.

¹⁰ Kingsgate. Charles eventually lost it to one of his numerous creditors.—Wraxall, *Historical and Posthumous Memoirs*, p. 9.

¹¹ Trevelyan, *Early History of Charles James Fox*, p. 25.

Holland House (in 1767¹²) and erecting and embellishing a new mansion, that is Kingsgate, he travelled in almost regal style to Italy nearly every year and some of his family always accompanied him. A still more important consideration is the extravagance of his sons, and it is estimated by Trevelyan that he spent at least two hundred thousand pounds at various times in clearing Charles and Stephen of indebtedness. Such an estimate, while enough to evoke astonishment, is perhaps a little within the mark, for in one year, 1773, the debt of Charles alone must have amounted to at least half that sum.¹³ On the whole we shall not go far wrong in fixing half a million sterling as an approximate estimate of Holland's capital wealth at its highest point.

Holland continued to enjoy the Pay Office until 1765, when the Grenville Ministry made it one of the conditions of a continuance in office that he should be dismissed.¹⁴ The King, on being approached with the demand, said, 'I don't much like turning him out, but with all my heart,

¹² Liechtenstein, *Holland House*, I. 26.

¹³ *Letters of Horace Walpole*, VIII. 374. In the British Museum may be found the original of the following : 'I do hereby order, direct, and dispose of my long annuities, and so much of my other stock, estates, and effects as will be sufficient to pay the debts of my son, the Hon'ble Charles James Fox, not exceeding the sum of one hundred thousand pounds . . . dated this 26th Novr., 1773. Holland.'—Add. MSS., 35068, f. 12.

¹⁴ Minute of Cabinet meeting, May 22, 1765 : *Grenville Papers*, III. 71.

Mr. Grenville.¹⁵ Such was the gratitude of a sovereign who had told Lady Holland that he would never forget his obligations to her husband for his work for the Peace.¹⁶ Still more noteworthy, as giving evidence of the King's ingratitude, was the fate of Holland's foolish and persistent efforts to gain an earldom. The latter was unwise enough, it appears, to covet a higher step in the peerage, perhaps partly because an earldom had been recently conferred upon his former rival. But Holland had made his mistake in not specifying an earldom in 1762, when his services were so imperative ; he had small hope of one now when even Bute had lost the power to reach the royal ear.¹⁷ It was in vain that Holland

¹⁵ A collection of Newcastle's letters entitled, *Narrative of the Changes in the Ministry* (ed. Bateson for Roy. Hist. Soc.), p. 18. Walpole gives us to understand that Holland was now eager to upset the Grenville Ministry, no matter what the means (*Memoirs*, II. 120), and he credits him with the authorship of the famous Regency Bill, which, more than anything else, brought that Ministry into disrepute.—*Ibid.* The fact, however, that Walpole argues on the assumption that Bute was Holland's tool in this matter, is in itself sufficient reason for repudiating his statement. But, as a matter of fact, Holland had as little influence with the Grenville Ministry as had Bute, the avowed enemy of the measure.

¹⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, I. 231.

¹⁷ We learn that Fox not only induced Walpole to sound Grafton, and (later) commissioned his son, Charles, to ply North for the same purpose, but he even made efforts to gain the help of Bute ; although the latter, as he knew, had entirely ceased to wield any influence at Court. For evidence of these unworthy endeavours, see Walpole, *Memoirs*, III. 68 ; Russell, I. 36 ; Trevelyan, pp. 276–7, and below, note 65.

affected a sympathetic interest in the Ministry of Grafton,¹⁸ in vain that he obtained an occasional audience with the King.¹⁹ Even when the latter sought his advice in 1767 (an incident we shall notice again later), there was no hint of any intention of rewarding him for the service. Yet we cannot well commend this evident obduracy on the part of the King. The earldom would have cost His Majesty nothing, and, as Walpole justly says, Holland 'had well earned it'.²⁰

The fact is, Holland's credit depended entirely upon the men whom he had last served in politics, and with Bute now in permanent retirement, there was no one eager, for the benefit of a retired 'veteran', to put pressure on an unwilling king. The majority of the Ministers may have felt that he was rich enough in other respects without

¹⁸ For example Holland interested himself in the efforts of this Ministry to effect a coalition with the Rockinghams, and seems, on the whole, to have acted the part of an informal and unsolicited adviser. Evidence on this subject will be found in *Grenville Papers*, III. 46, 93. During the same year (1769) Holland was described to Chatham as 'warm in his professions for the present system'.—*Chatham Corres.* III. 270.

¹⁹ We may assume that he had one audience in the summer of 1766, as he is reported to have 'left London, much dissatisfied with the Court, and the Court with him'.—*Grenville Papers*, III. 256. About a year and a half later he writes, 'I cannot help asking myself why I am in such disgrace with the King. Have I deserved it? I am now the only mark left of irrevocable displeasure, and I vow to God I cannot guess why.'—Holland to Selwyn (from Nice), January 27, 1768: *Jesse*, II. 247.

²⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, III. 68.

adding a new title to his harvest, and no doubt the conferment of an earldom upon a man so detested as Holland would have reacted painfully upon any of the shaky Ministries which succeeded Bute's. Indeed for some time after the Earl withdrew from public life both he and Holland were felt in some way to be in underhanded alliance against the Government,²¹ and the unpopularity of the ex-Paymaster continued long after his official career was closed. So we find Churchill, Gray and Mason vying with one another in savage verse at his expense ; and Churchill—more bitter than his fellows—depicts him

‘ revolving future schemes
his country to betray ’.

Junius did in truth spare him, doubtless because his father had been chaplain to Lady Caroline, and Holland had taken a friendly interest in the Francis family ; but Wilkes was from the first his inveterate enemy, and in one of the issues of the *North Briton* he proclaimed Holland as ‘ that person whom every man of honour despises, and every lover of his country is bound to curse’. Doubtless his feelings were embittered by Holland's sympathy with his enemies, and it may be questioned whether Wilkes was himself a ‘ man of honour ’ ; but the publication of such outbursts

²¹ So, for example, in a pamphlet of the time we find the expression, ‘ L—— H——d, the coadjutor and trusty counsellor of the favourite.’

kept a man in retirement from being forgotten, and partially explains why the bitterness against Holland long survived his active participation in politics.

In 1768 outspoken advocacy of Luttrell, the opponent of Wilkes, inflamed the people anew against the man who had always despised them, and he was now accused of being a 'public defaulter of unaccounted millions'.²² Of course, the charge was utterly false; for Holland's manipulation of the Pay Office funds was entirely legitimate, and the fault belongs rather to a despicable system than to this particular individual who never rose above it. Equally legitimate and customary was his delay in getting the accounts settled—a task doubly difficult in the present case by reason of the great outlay under the Pitt Administration; and although he easily persuaded the Barons of the Exchequer (who had called for a settlement) to extend his time, it was practically impossible, owing to the intricacies of the system and his own failing health, to get the accounts audited during his lifetime. In the present instance Holland was sufficiently annoyed by the

²² *Grenville Papers*, IV. 303; Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, III. 234, 252–3. It is not improbable that the sympathy accorded by Holland and his family to Luttrell was partly inspired by the desire to win the favour of Grafton, who had so much cause to loathe Wilkes. Apart from grounds of personal dislike (which probably troubled Holland little) the thirst for an earldom is the most natural motive to assign for his attitude.

clamours for an inquiry to publish a justification of himself in the papers—after which the agitation was quickly dropped.²³ The accounts in question were not actually made up until the middle of 1777.

The lesson, however, which one may learn from these attacks is that a man could not deliberately give up a high official position in order to amass a fortune in a subordinate post without incurring the stigma of great unpopularity. Other men before and since might and did profit by the Pay Office balances, but hardly to meet with such financial success as Holland gained, and none were so unfortunate as to be associated with the ‘Butcher’ of Culloden, the Peace of Paris, and the abandonment (under unpleasant circumstances) of a high office of state. It is, of course, true enough that more fault should have been found with a Government that allowed such a system than with the single individual, Lord Holland ; but it is perhaps safe to assert that people in general—and especially those outside of politics—are ever more ready to select a single

²³ An anonymous publication of the time, entitled, *The Fox unkennelled, or the Paymaster's Accounts laid open* (in itself a misnomer), gives some documents relative to the episode, but is of no critical value. It supports the charge that Holland was a ‘public defaulter’ on the ground that he still enjoyed the interest on the Pay Office funds in his hands, and it errs in stating that Pitt, Dupplin, Potter and others were prompt in settling their respective accounts. If Fox is a ‘defaulter’ for his particular offence, he at least, we must add, followed the precedent set him by every predecessor in the office—with the possible exception of Pitt.

man as a target than they are to wage war on the conditions which made him.

But if Holland was everything he should not have been in the eyes of the public, his private life was one of unusual merit. In his love for wife and children, in his warmth of affection for friends and kinsfolk he gives us just cause for feeling that if not a good citizen, he was at least a kind and lovable companion. The romance of Henry Fox and Lady Caroline Lennox never ended until the day of their parting, and the wife survived the husband but twenty-three days. Sir George Trevelyan has cited a letter, written by Holland twelve years after their marriage, in which every line seems to breathe that tender affection he always felt. ‘Indeed, my dear angel,’ he writes, ‘you have no reason to be peevish with me. Ask yourself whether you know an instance of my want of confidence in you, of your want of power with me. Upon my word you do not. I wrote to you yesterday. I rode to town this morning ; found six people in my house ; went to Court, Parliament, dined late, and am this moment waited for at the Speaker’s. What can I more than snatch this time to tell you that I am, for me, well, and that I love you dearly ?’²⁴ The kindness of Holland to all members of his family was a well-attested fact, and one can understand the emotions of Lady Sarah Lennox when she writes that ‘the idea of his death is something I cannot use myself to in

²⁴ Trevelyan, *Early History of Charles James Fox*, pp. 11–12.

the least'.²⁵ Again, later she tells us that she wishes to be with Lady Holland as much as possible while her husband continues so ill, adding, 'Besides I love him so that for my own satisfaction I wish to see him as much as I can.'²⁶

With his children²⁷ Holland was always a welcome comrade. No amount of personal care or sorrow could lessen his sympathy with their smallest interests; no amount of money seemed too great for the indulgent father to bestow upon their follies; and yet few children have ever been more expensive luxuries than Stephen and Charles James Fox. Both of them were inveterate and most unlucky gamblers, and it was not a rare occurrence for one or the other of them to lose ten thousand pounds in a single night's play. Yet seldom, as far as we know, did Holland show the least displeasure at such antics. His fortune was theirs—to save or to squander. Indeed, however much we may condemn those ill-gotten gains, posterity will always spare him the obloquy of the

²⁵ *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 156.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²⁷ Three sons of Holland survived him—Stephen (born February 20, 1745), who succeeded to the barony; Charles James (born January 24, 1749), the future champion of Liberalism under George III; and Henry Edward (born March 4, 1755), who became a general in the army, and served with distinction in America and Flanders. Holland's second son, Henry (born October 8, 1746), lived only a few months. Stephen died in December, 1774, little more than five months after his father; and on the death of the fourth Lord Holland in 1859, the barony became extinct.

miser ; and we cannot do better, perhaps, than reprint the charming touches from Sir George Trevelyan's pen, in regard to his fortune and its purpose. 'The ugliest of all the features of Lord Holland's career,' writes the biographer of his son, 'acquired a softer aspect by the light of his own fireside. His unsparing and unreasoning generosity to his children, in itself another fault, does something to render less odious the rapacity for which he is proverbially remembered. Without a spark of the patriotism which dignified the selfishness of Wolsey and the cupidity of Marlborough, he regarded the interests of the nation much as his namesake in the animal world regards the interests of the poultry-yard ; but at any rate he was not, like the great soldier, actuated by avarice, nor, like the churchman, by a passion for personal display. He plundered the many, whom he neither hated nor loved, in order to load with wealth, and surfeit with pleasure, the few human beings for whom he would have laid down his life, as readily and as lightly as he sacrificed his conscience and his reputation.' When Stephen Fox became affianced to a relative of the Duke of Bedford,²⁸ Holland straightway pledged the young couple a goodly share of his own fortune ; 'I am extremely sensible,' he wrote to Bedford, 'of the honour done my son, and will contribute (besides

²⁸ Mary, daughter of the first Earl of Upper Ossory, and granddaughter, on her mother's side, of the first Earl Gower, father-in-law of the Duke of Bedford.

dying very soon) to what may give the young people great affluence.'²⁹ 'There was a wish,' adds Trevelyan, 'as well as a prophecy in that quaint parenthesis.'³⁰

It was to his home that Holland looked for all the happiness that the world denied him.³¹ When at last the old statesman brought his own career to an end, it was a comfort and a pleasure that a son of his was riding fast upon the road to greatness. Charles James Fox was from the first a boy of unusual promise and talent. It only remained to be seen whether an unwise parent would fatally mar that budding genius. Even as early as when he was at school, Holland took him away from his studies to plunge him into the temptations of Parisian society, and it is said that he deliberately sent him, with pockets full, to try his fortune at the gaming-table.³² 'Let nothing be done to break his spirit,' he had once counselled Lady Holland;

²⁹ Holland to Bedford, March 29, 1766: *Bedford Corres.* III. 330.

³⁰ Trevelyan, *Early History of Charles James Fox*, pp. 272-3.

³¹ Writing from abroad in the spring of 1764, Holland observes, 'My son Charles really deserves all that can be said of his parts, as I will convince you when I see you at Holland House. But he has what I value much more—good sense, good nature, and as many good and amiable qualities as ever met in any one's composition. I have two sons here; the eldest bids fair for being as universally and as much beloved as ever I was hated. Thus happy in private life, am I not in the right to leave the public?'—Russell, *Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox*, I. 13.

³² *Ibid.* I. 7.

'the world will effect that business soon enough.'³³ It seemed as though Holland felt that his son might have in store for him the disappointments he himself had experienced, and must accordingly offset them by living in his youth a life without restraint. Perhaps, too, he believed that Charles would settle down eventually to soberer living, just as he had done.

But whatever the faults of Holland's tutelage, the tie between this father and son was always of the closest, and it is hardly strange that Charles Fox should have idolized a parent who gratified his every whim. To Holland it was enough that the lad made him the sharer of many a leisure hour. 'Charles is above measure kind and attentive to me,' wrote the old man during one of his summers at Kingsgate. 'He has a good heart, and is more to be admired for that than for his head, which you know is no bad one.'³⁴ In his young son's career in politics Holland naturally took the keenest interest, and it is almost pathetic to read of the delight which some youthful feat in Parliament gave the man who had once been such a power there himself. That Charles's conduct should have been influenced by his father was only natural; and it is interesting to note both that he moved a repeal of the Hardwicke Marriage Act, of which Holland had once been so conspicuous an opponent, and that he inherited all his father's deep resentment against Rigby, Bedford and Shelburne. Now and then

³³ Wraxall, *Historical and Posthumous Memoirs*, II. 5.

³⁴ Holland to Macartney, June 30, 1766: Russell, I. 27.

he was called upon to defend his unpopular parent ; and we have no doubt that Charles was more than glad of a chance to prove his filial regard. Naturally Holland was much annoyed when his promising son resigned, in a fit of pique,³⁵ his first official post, a seat in the Admiralty under the North Administration.³⁶ It had never been the habit of Henry Fox to carry resentment into politics to the extent of entering Opposition ; still less was he accustomed to be swayed by impulse, good or bad. Indeed, from one aspect it may have been a misfortune that his temper had been so cool, and his political affiliations so close.

The great unpopularity of Holland in his later years, of which we read so much, had nothing to do with his disposition or with his manner³⁷—

³⁵ From Fox's own account it would appear that conscientious scruples had some influence in determining his action, as he intended to oppose a measure of the Government (the Royal Marriage Bill). See Trevelyan, pp. 439–40. Such scruples would certainly have no weight with his father, who had joined with Pitt in harassing the Administration of which he was a member in 1754.

³⁶ This was in February 1772. Lord Russell (I.74) sufficiently disproves Walpole's charge that Holland instigated his son's resignation on account of his failure to obtain an earldom. The old man was greatly delighted when Charles was given a place at the Treasury Board the following September.—Trevelyan, p. 474. This he retained until he was dismissed in February 1774 for his undue political independence.

³⁷ George Selwyn, who claims to have possessed a natural aversion to Ministers, declares, ‘ I never knew but one in my life I could pass an hour with pleasantly, which was Lord Holland.’—Roscoe and Clerque, *George Selwyn*.

which was never anything but genial and kindly. Already it has been said that Chesterfield gave him credit for a wonderful facility for making friends ; and looking back upon his career, we can see that he nearly always won the affections of the various types of men with whom he was politically connected.³⁸ Pelham and Cumberland, Marlborough, Devonshire and Bedford—all felt for him a quality of friendship that was by no means solely political ; and Winnington, Williams and Rigby were only the most prominent of a large group of intimates with whom he passed his leisure hours. That some of these associates—Rigby and Shelburne for instance—should have deserted him when his power was waning was only a common feature in an age in which politics could sully friendships ; while the cases of Cumberland and Bedford are cases of impulsive men who could let a trifling disagreement end a long and intimate acquaintance.³⁹ Especially

³⁸ ‘No statesman,’ writes Mr. Creasy, in his sketch of Fox, ‘ever acquired more adherents, not merely from political motives, but by the influence of his agreeable manners.’

³⁹ Just why Bedford should have fallen out with Holland is not clear. They had both been supporters of the Bute Ministry, and had cordially co-operated in bringing success to the Peace. We can only judge (from *Fox's Memoirs*, p. 81) that the Duchess of Bedford having for a private grudge alienated her husband from Bute, Holland in his turn came in for a share of the Duke's dislike. Holland himself declares that ‘there was nothing he was ever so much resolved against, or so dishonest, that she could not bring him to’. He makes no mention of Rigby in his connexion : but it may possibly have been he who induced Bedford to go back on him. Two years before

to be reprehended is Cumberland, whose interests Holland for long made the mainspring of his career—quite as much from personal affection as from motives of policy. Indeed, when he loved a man, as he did Walpole, he would serve him with a rare fidelity, even when contrary to his own immediate interest.⁴⁰ Holland was long and deservedly popular among his fellows in politics ; and even Granville, cynical and unsympathetic as he was, was glad in time to become his political spokesman. But the old peer had the misfortune to outlive by many years most of the friends who would have loved him in spite of all his public offences ; and when the twilight of his life had come, only the witty George Selwyn remained to share with him the memories of ‘brighter things long past’. It was because his old age was almost friendless that Holland was lucky to be compensated by the pleasures of his home.

he made this observation he had replied to Bedford on a matter of business (see p. 303), and after alluding to their misunderstanding (for which he can find no explanation) he declined to permit Bedford to visit him, as the latter had desired.

⁴⁰ Henry Fox’s loyalty to Walpole was one of the few bright spots in his public career. As Hillsborough said, Fox ‘really loved that man’. On one occasion he spoke of him in the House of Commons as ‘that great Minister, whom I shall always be proud to imitate, and shall never be ashamed of having been one of his constant friends’.—*Parliamentary History*, XIV. 397. With all his political cynicism Fox was not without feelings of gratitude for those in public life, who had done him a kindness. His grandson tells us that he always felt a warm regard for Bute, although the latter did no more than fulfil his obligations, and even so rather reluctantly.

One fact which militated against the happiness of Holland's later years was his steadily failing health. Though he seems to have been better when he retired from active politics, he was taken so ill in Paris during the summer that his death was actually reported. After 1763 he never knew what it was to be free from pain or weakness. Nearly every autumn found him journeying with his family to the Continent in order to spend the winter months either at Nice or Naples ; then in the spring he returned to England, spending the summer at his beloved Kingsgate, where he could drink in the fresh sea-air, and amuse himself with planning and constructing grotesque arbours and pavilions. But even all this could not restore his shattered health. In August 1768 he made an effort to complete the memoirs which he had begun many years before on the early events of George III's reign, but he soon gave up the task, probably finding it too great a hardship.⁴¹ He is commonly believed to have been the author of a non-political journal, called *The Spendthrift*, which was issued for a few months during 1767 ; but a letter of Charles Fox shows conclusively that his friend Lord Carlisle, and not Holland, was the writer in question.⁴²

That Holland spent his last years in the bitterness

⁴¹ *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 79. Holland appears to have written the greater part of this account in September, 1762 (*ibid.* p. 74), adding a few items at different times afterwards.

⁴² Russell, I. 43.

of remorse is certainly not deducible from our knowledge of his thoughts. Too truly a reflection of the time to be self-critical, he was also too thoroughly a politician to be sensitive. He accepted his dismissal from the Pay Office with commendable resignation ;⁴³ and in his eyes the treachery of Rigby was far more a ground for complaint than the clamours of public hatred which he was naturally too callous to feel. Holland's disposition had always been cheerful, and

⁴³ *Life and Letters of Sarah Lennox*, p. 170. ‘It comes chiefly, I understand, from the Bedfords,’ he wrote to his wife, ‘which is as it should be, for there is not one of them that is not greatly obliged to me. Now, my dear Caroline, let us consider how this affects us. There is an end of every view ; but then there is not any we had all set our hearts on. I should have liked to be an earl ; but indeed I should be ashamed, if at my age I could not give up that with the utmost ease. What then have we to regret ? You never thought of a Court life, and neither my health nor age would have admitted of politics. It seems, then, this only leads to the life we must and should have led. We shall have money enough for everything but gaming, and nothing were sufficient for that. You’ll live at your favourite Holland House a good deal, and a little more than the four hot months will suffice for me here (at Kingsgate). How will it affect the children ? I hope, not at all. This does not hinder Ste from having the world before him. Charles will be angry, I believe ; but at his age it will do him no harm, and he may be the more egged on by it. May I not build on him for my hours of comfort ? Harry is too young and too happy to ever know of this. He is the happiest of mortals and gone to show Lords Ilchester and Bateman the Margate sands, while I am writing in a room prettier than you can imagine. Well, Caroline, I don’t think you need, or will, turn your eyes from this prospect.’—Trevelyan, pp. 275–6.

though we now read sometimes of his being low-spirited, his letters during these years are nearly always bright, and no one would readily believe they came from the hand of a chronic invalid. Once or twice, it is true, we detect some allusion to the hate which the public bore him ; but never can this be said to have clouded his moments of comfort or happiness. It is not until 1768, when life had become less endurable, that we find him writing : ‘There is one question, which I hope will not be asked—

“Has life no sourness drawn so near its end ?”

Indeed it has ; yet I guard against it as much as possible, and am weak enough sometimes to think that if Rigby chiefly, and some others, had pleased, I should have walked down the vale of years more easily ; but it is weak in me to think so often as I do of Rigby, and you will be ashamed of me.’⁴⁴ It was now, when Holland was old and suffering, that certain results of his misspent career were beginning to tinge his thoughts with bitterness. In the few remaining years of his life he grew rapidly feebler, frequently longing for death, and latterly given additional pain by witnessing the suffering of his wife, who was slowly dying of cancer. Finally, on July 1, 1774, death came to release him, and he expired at the age of sixty-nine, ‘quite worn out in mind and body.’⁴⁵ Once during his

⁴⁴ Holland to Selwyn, January 27, 1768 : Jesse, II. 246.

⁴⁵ Walpole, *Last Journals*, (ed. Steuart), I. 362.

last illness a bit of his old humour returned, as though to cheer his dying moments. On being told that Selwyn had called and inquired after him, Holland bade his attendants show him up if he came again. ‘If I am alive,’ he said, ‘I shall be glad to see him ; and if I am dead, he would like to see me.’⁴⁶

Lord Holland was buried at Farley in Wiltshire, on the oldest estate in the Fox family. A fitting epitaph might be found in the tribute paid him by a reviewer of Lord Chesterfield’s *Characters*. ‘Fox,’ he writes, ‘was an excellent husband, a most indulgent father, a kind master, a courteous neighbor, and, what the world in general has little known, but which I now tell them on the best authority, a man whose charities demonstrated that he possessed in abundance the milk of human kindness.’⁴⁷ Still more eloquent are the words from Macaulay’s pen. ‘In natural disposition,’ writes the great historian, ‘as well as in talents he bore a great resemblance to his more celebrated son. He had the same sweetness of temper, the same strong passions, the same opinions, boldness, and impetuosity, the same cordiality toward friends, the same placability toward enemies. No man was ever more warmly or justly loved by his family or his associates.’⁴⁸ Greater praise than this, few men have had. The reader may judge whether Holland deserves it.

⁴⁶ Jesse, III. 50.

⁴⁷ *Annual Register for 1777*, p. 18.

⁴⁸ From his *Essay on Chatham*.

The question now naturally occurs to us—has the career of Henry Fox (if we may revert to the name by which he is best known) any features worthy of admiration ? Is his character, on the whole, an admirable one ? And did he make the best use of the abilities that were in him ?

In finding an answer to these questions let us take a brief survey of the career which we have studied—a career which shows the mark of great brilliancy, and the stigma of great blunders. In his private life (with which this work is not primarily concerned) Fox shows us in many respects an example worthy of any age. But just as in his private life he showed toward his sons an indulgence, which, given without stint, was certain to affect their future careers, so in his political life he exhibited such a want of self-control and moral soundness as to make of his own career a long series of political manœuvres, which hardly ever rise to the level of statesmanship. Fox talked much of (and certainly believed in) his own ‘honesty’ and ‘good nature’.⁴⁹ But his ‘honesty’ took merely the accepted form of loyalty (in general) to political engagements and the interests of his friends ; it was an ‘honesty’ which permitted the accumulation of wealth by the aid of government

⁴⁹ ‘I have been honest and good natured,’ he once wrote to Selwyn, ‘nor can I repent of it ; though convinced now that honesty is not the best policy, and that good nature does not meet with the return it ought to do.’—Holland to Selwyn, March 31, 1770.—Jesse, II. 378.

funds. His ‘good nature’ was of that sort which exists while politically advisable, but was unable to stand proof against the temptation to give to others some measure of the misfortune he had brought upon himself. No doubt his unpopularity was scarcely justified in an age of which self-interest was almost invariably the key-note, and success would have wiped out much, as it did in the case of Pitt. Yet the ultimate verdict of his contemporaries is not without some weight; and few great politicians have more significantly reaped the harvest of their misdeeds than Henry Fox.

Before we pass, however, to a closer scrutiny of Fox’s career, it may be worth while, in the hope of obtaining a more accurate measure of his conduct, to raise the question whether he possessed any theories of government. Lord Chesterfield—not perhaps a very keen critic of political leaders—has given us a short sketch of Fox, in which he declares that the latter ‘had not the least notion or regard for the public good or the constitution’.⁵⁰ The assertion is so sweeping that one is compelled to demur a little. Fox’s attitude on military matters and his stand on the question of Minorca must be given their proper weight in any charge that he was blind or indifferent to the ‘public good’; and surely he was not so extraordinarily ignorant as to have ‘*no notion*’ of the constitution! But with these qualifications Chesterfield’s state-

⁵⁰ *Chesterfield’s Correspondence* (ed. Bradshaw), III. 1427.

ment is true enough. Fox had but little regard for the public good, and still less for the constitution.

Now, it has been sufficiently proven in the history of the Newcastle Administration that if a leader of the House of Commons is to act with efficiency and complete success, he must possess an authority, which, if supervised, is at least not hampered by any member of the Ministry. In other words the leader must know precisely what ‘gratifications’ there are to offer to his fellows, and exactly what promises have already been made. We are dealing now with a system which was based to a large extent upon bribery—not so much the actual distribution of money (although that element was not wanting) as a trafficking in places, promotions and boroughs.⁵¹ In this manner—save in

⁵¹ Most boroughs fall naturally into two groups : those under Crown patronage, and therefore at the disposal of the Treasury ; and those in which some individual held the interest, that is, the right to nominate the candidates for Parliament. Newcastle was not only a prolific borough-monger on his own account, but his indirect sway was even greater through the effective influence he exerted (by the force of obligation) over most other borough-mongers. It is for this reason that we have said elsewhere that ‘it was hardly a difficult matter for a preponderance of boroughs to slide under the control of one politician or one political interest’. The case of the counties being different, the magnate in power was compelled in county elections to depend more upon the device of granting favours to the prominent land-owners or of distributing money among individual voters. But county representation was always comparatively pure. On the other hand, the actual sale of boroughs (that is, of the right of nomination) became more and more notorious. Finally, when the First Lord of the Treasury came

extraordinary cases—a majority in the House of Commons was assured to the Government (for it was obviously against the Commons primarily that this machinery was directed). Such a system goes far to explain the long-continued ascendancy of the Whigs. Walpole was its greatest organizer, and the Pelhams carried it on. ‘I think it needless to suggest to you,’ wrote the Earl of Orford to his political successor, ‘the necessity of forming within yourself your own scheme. You must be understood by those that you are to depend upon ; and if it is possible, they must be persuaded to keep their own secret. Remember that the weakness of the present Treasury has left them at your mercy, and exposed them to the contempt of mankind.’⁵² Poor unfortunates ! ‘exposed to the contempt of mankind,’ because the cover was for the moment lifted, and the worms were crawling in the scorching sunlight ! Obviously the less conspicuous the power (which for want of a better name we denote as the power of patronage), the more impregnable the position of the man or group of men who wielded it. Pelham had no confidant in the management save his brother. Newcastle, having the misfortune to be excluded from the House of Commons, was forced to delegate the

to consider the question of rewarding his dependents or of seeking to gain new ones, there was, in truth, a traffic in boroughs, analogous to the traffic in places, pensions and promotions.

⁵² Orford to Pelham, August 25, 1743 : Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 91.

active work to a subordinate. But invariably distrusting the recognized Manager, the Duke always refused to disclose the extent of his resources, or give him *carte blanche* in the promise of employments ; and hence the Leader of the Commons was always curtailed and hampered by the First Lord of the Treasury.

Fox himself was never the owner of such a system as we have described. Under Newcastle he was merely an active, semi-responsible jobber, never enjoying the entire confidence of his superior, and never allowed a free hand in the dispensing of patronage. The hap-hazard management of Parliament ceased when he took the 'lead' in 1755 ; but nothing but the hearty co-operation of Newcastle (temporarily tendered) had made success possible in the session of 1755–6, and he soon found confirmation for his belief in the inadequacy of a semi-responsible management. So, for that, and other reasons, he retired, and escaped the inevitable failures of the next session.

But a crisis which we have discussed in full made it necessary for Bute to force the Peace of Paris through Parliament, and the circumstances were such that he *must not fail*. Grenville, who had reluctantly battled under the usual limitations of parliamentary management, was in every respect ill-fitted for so hazardous a task. It was Fox, and Fox alone, through whom Bute could reasonably expect success. But no risks could be justified. Fox undoubtedly made it clear that in such a case as this .

no curtailment in power would be countenanced.
In his particular sphere he must be supreme.

And so Henry Fox became ‘His Majesty’s Minister in the House of Commons’,⁵³ with complete authority in all matters of patronage, and a seat in the Cabinet without a portfolio ;⁵⁴ finally, he was not to be accountable even to the Ministry for the use that he made of his power.⁵⁵ We have dwelt elsewhere on the manner in which he employed it, and the striking success which he achieved. But let us consider just what such a situation meant in a proper estimation of his position. For the origin of this system we must go back a period of years. Thoroughly disgusted with the parliamentary blunders of the Duke of Newcastle, Henry Legge had suggested in 1754 that there should be a special minister in the House of Commons, directly responsible to the King for the management of the House. Whether he were a minister (in the ordinary sense) or a cabinet

⁵³ Page 253. This title (except when the Leader happened to be a minister in the usual sense) was unprecedented. The Leader of the House of Commons was sometimes called ‘the House of Commons Minister’, but his position as such was customarily an informal creation of the Cabinet or of its ruling interest. He was not a specially delegated ‘minister’, known as ‘His Majesty’s Minister in the House of Commons’.

⁵⁴ A modernism is almost necessary here in order to avoid ambiguity.

⁵⁵ One contemporary wrote of the Commons at that time as ‘now so low as to have a leader put over them in no ministerial office whatever, and consequently responsible for nothing, and ignorant of everything he does not choose to know.’—Nuthall to Lady Chatham, October 4, 1762 : *Chatham Corres.* II. 181.

councillor mattered not in Legge's opinion, so long as he had complete and uninterrupted access to the royal Closet. The idea was eagerly grasped by both Fox and Pitt, and was now for the first time put into execution. Pitt, it is true, had always been free to approach the King during his occupancy of the Foreign Office, but even he had not possessed the power of political life and death over the House of which he was manager. And Legge himself had not foreseen that a contingency might arise which should make the initiative lie, not with the manager, but with the King. It was Fox who now compelled the popular branch of Parliament to bend to the royal will. Every member of Parliament (that could be reached), every holder of place or pension, who voiced a protest against the Peace, was threatened with political extinction. The position of Fox was unprecedented in the history of Georgian England. He was the King's special 'minister' for the corruption of the Commons. He was enacting a new and most insidious phase of Toryism. He was, in effect, proclaiming the right of the King (through his efficient agent) to supervise the Commons. He was pleading the full weight of the royal prerogative—what the King can bestow, the King can take away.⁵⁶ He was, finally,

⁵⁶ We have it on Walpole's authority that Fox went so far as to ask the Chancellor, Lord Northington, whether the King could not revoke the patents of sinecures, &c., conferred in former reigns, and whether such cases might not be laid before the judges. The blunt sarcasm of the Chancellor's reply is worth adding: 'Yes,' he responded, 'they might lay the idea

leading a merciless crusade against a system which had been based upon the great Whig families—a system which, as grasped by Newcastle, meant the subservience of a venal Parliament to a munificent Ministry, of which he, the master of boroughs and the monarch of patronage, had been the practical head. For two months now a typically Tory system replaced a Whig system, and Fox was the active exponent of that Toryism.

But can we say that Fox was a sincere and convinced adherent of a strong kingship—a kingship, let us say, which was destined to prostrate the Ministry of his son? No, the appeal to royal power was but a means to an end—nothing more. Utterly regardless of the true spirit of constitutional government, Fox was wielding a temporary tyranny for the sake of unqualified success: and the King happened to be at this time a safer bulwark than a party controlled by the Duke of Newcastle. The Peace went through, and the Whigs were overthrown. To the constitutional aspects of political problems he was entirely indifferent.

The great and inglorious work of Fox in the autumn of 1762 represents, in fact, the limit of what could be done with the corrupt system in

before the judges, and then refer Magna Charta to them afterwards to decide on that too.'—*Memoirs*, I. 188–9. Fox's attitude in this matter, if reported correctly, might go far toward substantiating Lord Chesterfield's charge that he had 'no notion' of the constitution. Yet it may well be true that he was simply desiring to go just as far as the law would let him.

vogue at his time ; while the Tory element, which was introduced to lend efficiency, was the natural result of a strong and influential monarchy. In 1767, when the tragic Ministry of Chatham was facing imminent collapse, Fox (then Lord Holland) came to Court at the King's instance, and reiterated his belief in the system of 1762. His advice at this time differed only in respect to the duration of power which it gave to the policy of the royal supervisor.⁵⁷ Every title, pension or promotion, which the King had the right to bestow, should be employed in the systematic construction of a completely subservient Parliament : then the royal will⁵⁸ should be exerted not simply in one emergency but in all. By so doing, the American crisis might be treated practically at first hand by the King, and Opposition would be no more a practicable possibility than it had been in 1762. Such a system would make the King the permanent champion of corruption. Such, in fact, was the system, which the King to a large extent applied, when his confidant, Lord North, enjoyed the

⁵⁷ Von Ruville, III. 231. Dr. von Ruville believes that Holland had intended his system in 1762 to be permanent, but that the King and Bute had not supported his plan. This view, however, is not consistent with Holland's desire at that time to leave politics as soon as possible (see p. 281). Holland's audience, above-mentioned, probably took place on July 22 ; see *Grenville Papers*, IV. 88.

⁵⁸ According to Walpole, Holland declared to him (Walpole) that the King could make a page First Minister, if he so desired.—*Memoirs of George III*, III. 49.

management of the Commons. In the terrible responsibility for this profligate type of government George III and Henry Fox must bear an equally criminal share.

Perhaps, indeed, the rôle, which Fox attempted, was played all the more easily because he possessed one common defect of the time, and in a conspicuous degree. He had no sympathy with the great mass of unenfranchised citizens, whose political value Pitt first discovered, and then utilized. To the mind of Fox any such manœuvring was as useless from the point of view of practical politics, as it was subversive of established custom. ‘The better-sort,’ ‘men of wealth and understanding,’ he had once declared, should be the ones to rule.⁵⁹ Such were bound under the existing system—so he believed—to rise to positions of authority ; and doubtless in the long run he was correct. But his attitude toward Porteous and Anstruther, if not also Governor Knowles, shows us that in his opinion a man in authority should govern without protest or restriction from those below, and that the chief danger to military men in particular was lack of firmness in the face of opposition. This latter view may have been borrowed from Cumberland, but Fox certainly applied it himself as a civilian when he gained completely unrestricted management of the Commons.

Still more indicative, however, of Fox’s position are his own expressions regarding the force we

⁵⁹ See vol. I, p. 42.

are considering. ‘That the licentiousness of the people,’ he declares, ‘in future times will destroy their own privileges and introduce despotism, I mean European despotism, is most certain, and may be foreseen with much horror, were it not for the transition.’⁶⁰ Doubtless Pitt, rather than Fox, was the exponent of the ‘unusual’; but few would have expressed his contempt for the populace in such sweeping terms. Evidently Fox believed that Toryism (presumably a corrupt Toryism) was inevitable, and would tend more and more toward unlimited power. Such, indeed, was his lack of penetration that he did not foresee that an irresponsible commercialism was the immediate danger of the future, and that the crash would come before he could live long enough to see the fallacies of such a policy. We cannot blame Fox, of course, for not being a critic of Newcastle philosophy; but even in those times public spirit was not by most regarded as he regarded it. One may add indeed with some justice that his whole career was an insult to it.

Enough has, perhaps, been said to demonstrate that Fox’s theory of practical government was the generally accepted system, worked out in an arbitrary manner by a thoroughly responsible and efficient manager, and supervised (if at all) by an able political *coterie*, or else by the King himself. The spirit of the constitution was of no account to

⁶⁰ Fox’s Memoirs, *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 77.

Henry Fox. Still less was the effect which precedent might have upon future development. He lived and worked for himself and his friends. To call him Whig or Tory, to proclaim him an upholder of the royal prerogative or an advocate of constitutional government, to represent him as a leader of parties or set him down as an independent quasi-professional politician, would be equally impossible in a precise description of his theories. He was, in fact, all of these things, yet none of them. It was, after all, practice, not theories, which Henry Fox considered. His one unchangeable ideal was the aforesaid policy of managing the Commons. For the constitution, as Lord Chesterfield says, he had no regard whatever.

But none of all this (unless we except his contempt for public opinion) will in any way explain the depth of Fox's unpopularity. It was not his work for the Peace that brought such odium upon his head ; it had taken more than the disasters of 1756 to focus upon him the general disapproval of contemporaries : and the downfall of the Whigs was, after all, a party matter. Men could employ the political methods in vogue without fear of the slightest censure ; they could prostitute their power for political ends, yet never suffer ; but even the age of Walpole, Pelham and Pitt could blush when its most consummate figure in politics was able to crown his career with a fortune so prodigious. A fox, stealthily bearing off bags of gold—such was the manner in which the cartoons

depicted him. It was not Fox the corruptionist, but Fox the ‘Croesus’, that his contemporaries hated. Useless it may be to plead the customs at the Pay Office ; still more useless, to charge the times with a palpable inconsistency. The general want of political probity made no difference in the estimate of Fox. Where patriotism is mute, Envy will speak.

It is unfair, however, to single out Fox as a peculiarly and inordinately corrupt politician of his age. A study of the period must show us that he was merely pursuing the methods customarily employed at his time, and it was more his extraordinary acuteness and unparalleled success with these methods than any greater scruple on the part of his contemporaries that has given his defects an undeserved prominence. None the less, the realization of what is honourable and patriotic is not a mere novelty in the age which succeeded him, and while we may seek to adjust the balance of discredit that is due him, this cannot excuse him for living the life that he did or wasting his opportunities. Fox’s talents, we think, cannot be disputed ; his energy was hardly less conspicuous ; and his close intimacy with prominent noblemen gave him a peculiar advantage over most of his rivals for place and power. The noblest act in his twenty years of public life was his refusal in 1754 to bow down to the man who chose statesmen for their subservience, and suffered no intellect but his own to govern the State. But the

disappointments which Fox experienced at that time —first, his failure to succeed Pelham (which came just as he was rising in the public esteem by force of talent alone), and secondly, his lost opportunity of becoming an unfettered Leader of the Lower House —seem somehow to have stamped out all the nobler features of his ambition ; and hence it was that he bartered his independence for a seat in the Cabinet, and consummated his error by accepting the Seals on the very conditions which he had scorned eighteen months before. When at length he could bear his position no longer, he retired from a Ministry in which he had been a cipher, and sacrificed his political aspirations with the single thought of heaping wealth and titles upon the wife and sons who were dearer to him than all else.

Therefore, knowing Newcastle, and having the case of Pitt for comparison, we may be justified in feeling that after December, 1754, Fox's ambition was wholly misdirected, and foredoomed to failure. The rivalry with Pitt had been an important feature of his career, but the less favoured man had eclipsed him in the end, because Fox's instinct, unlike the other's, was fundamentally at fault. Self-control as a politician Fox never had, and never learned; he could not wait, as did his haughty rival, for the supreme time to strike. On the other hand we must concede that Pitt had only himself to serve in the field of politics,⁶¹ while Fox was for

⁶¹ Pitt's relations with Leicester House were of a very different character from Fox's connexion with Cumberland.

a long period the mainstay of the Duke of Cumberland's interests, and it has even been argued that his fatal surrender in December, 1754, was actuated by the desire to promote his patron's policy.⁶² But, having once become identified with the Newcastle Administration, he was only too likely to sully his career with blunders far graver ; and, when we are forced to reflect that he saved that incompetent Ministry from downfall,⁶³ we can hardly err in holding him *initially* responsible for a year of misgovernment and disaster.

Fox has been justly called a 'political adventurer'.⁶⁴ What principles he possessed were not a guide for his conduct but a pledge of his loyalty. He got what he could from the advantages of the moment. His career was conspicuously a 'hand-to-mouth' career. When his comparatively estimable services under Pelham had yielded no fitting reward, Fox became henceforth but little

Pitt used many and various means of assisting himself in his struggles for power, but he always put his own independent judgement above any political obligations ; and it was his isolation, as a result of this policy, that negatively contributed to his fall. He had virtually no party, and since 1751 no patron ; and he never became so seriously entangled in a political alliance that he could not, and would not, dissolve it, when he chose.

⁶² Von Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham* (Eng. trans.), I. 353.

⁶³ It may be recalled how Bedford had said : 'He has saved the Duke of Newcastle, who without his acceptance was absolutely undone.'

⁶⁴ The expression is Macaulay's.

better than a professional politician—a sort of political *condottiere*—intriguing for this place or that, and haggling over the price of his services. Naturally this tendency grew with him as time went on. In the humiliating attitude which he showed in his efforts to keep Bute to the terms of the bargain of October, 1762, and his later importunity in pursuit of an earldom,⁶⁵ we may judge how low the man who had once defied Newcastle had actually fallen. In 1753 he had spoken of his power in a tone worthy of Pitt; in 1763 he was content to whine for the crumbs which fell from the Ministers' table.

Surveying as a whole his talents and opportunities, one is forced to believe that Fox's failure was entirely his own fault, and due in great part to his lack of moral breadth and soundness. But it is also true that the habit of surveying everything from the viewpoint of practical politics was in

⁶⁵ We have it on the authority of Lord Bristol that Holland actually sought the aid of Chatham for the fulfilment of his ambition (Bristol to Chatham, June 10, 1767: *Chatham Corres.* III. 270); and though we may not accept one man's authority as conclusive evidence that he could have stooped so low as to ask a favour of a man he had long and bitterly detested, nevertheless the citations we possess (Trevelyan, p. 277) of a letter of Holland's to Bute show conspicuously enough how much the man's dignity had fallen. 'Do you remember,' he asks Bute, 'you, who never deceived me, when you told me, if I asked anything for my children, I should see the esteem the King has for me? I see no signs of it.' Surely one must despise this pathetic appeal for the gratification of a whim so trivial!

itself sufficiently fatal to any chance of acquiring the qualities of statesmanship. Though too shrewd a politician not to condemn the Government's policy of taxing the colonies in 1765,⁶⁶ that same habit of mind had led him to persecute Murray,⁶⁷ and (from personal motives) to defend Newcastle's subsidies. Indeed the few instances in which Fox's conduct was independent of personal or party considerations renders us doubly indignant that he would not aspire to a higher level of conduct. So his attitude on military matters makes his conduct as a whole the more culpable. In his opposition to the regiment-speculation in 1745, in his anxiety for the integrity of courts martial, or in his repeated support of a militia bill (once, indeed, when it meant defiance of his colleagues) we have the example of a nobler spirit and a course of conduct based probably upon conviction. But these are almost his only exhibitions of statesmanship. Though he opposed the Ministry's policy with reference to Minorca, and conceived an

⁶⁶ Russell, *Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox*, I. 123. 'I am more sorry a good deal,' he writes on one occasion, 'for the rebellion of the Colonies. But I should date it from the passing of the Stamp Act, not the repeal of it.'—*Ibid.*

⁶⁷ We may assume, I think, that Fox's measures against Alexander Murray were due to his settled conviction that Tories should never be allowed any quarter. The fact that he carried his hostility to such lengths might have been due to the self-importance and despotic spirit which generally distinguished Parliamentary majorities in the eighteenth century.

ingenious plan for retrieving the disaster, he was not man enough to resign when his opinions were rejected, and he did not actually retire till his manipulation of the Commons was in danger.

Fox's fame must, in fact, lie wholly within the sphere of party politics—as a master of logic in debate,⁶⁸ as a leader and manager of political groups, and as a skilful manipulator of corruption. Bred in the school of Walpole, and serving an apprenticeship under Pelham, Fox accepted the system of politics as he found it, and handled the essential features with wonderful dexterity. As a party manager (whether in the defence of measures in the House of Commons, or in the more delicate task of ensuring their success beforehand), he was certainly without a peer in his age, and indeed almost as indispensable to the well-being of ministries as Pitt's genius became necessary to the conduct of a war. There is hardly any doubt but that Fox felt the keenest fascination for the work for which he was so eminently fitted ; and his last appearance in the field of politics was

⁶⁸ According to Walpole, who was probably a competent critic of the House of Commons, Fox employed ‘a vehemence of reasoning and closeness of argument, which beat all the orators of the time’.—*Memoirs of George II*, 81. This is no small praise, seeing that Murray was one of those orators. Macaulay's tribute in a later day is perhaps worth adding : ‘As a debater,’ he writes, ‘as a master of that keen, weighty, manly logic which is suited to the discussion of political questions, he has perhaps never been surpassed except by his son.’

signalized by the same ardour, the same skill and the same certainty of success.

In many respects Henry Fox may be considered as a typical product of his time, with most of the faults to be found therein, but with more than its average display of energy and talent. We have but to note what he achieved in politics to realize the force of his ability. Of one Ministry he was in more than one respect the saviour ; of two, and possibly three,⁶⁹ he was the immediate destroyer. In his active membership of the War Party, and more especially his conduct in the controversy over Braddock's expedition, he may be said almost to have carried everything before him, and his support of Cumberland on such occasions was as valuable for its purpose as it was dangerous in effect. Again, his advice respecting the Prince in 1751 might, if carried out, have given a wholly different character to the trend of politics in later years ; and the plan of giving Bute the Stole he put through singly and unaided—indeed by sheer force of perseverance. Nor can we forget the consummate cleverness with which he drew the net about Byng, while he shielded his former colleagues by sealing the ruin of the Admiral. Much of all this may have been culpable, perhaps contemptible, if you will, but it cannot detract from his capability—

⁶⁹ It will be remembered that Devonshire ascribed Bute's sudden retirement to Fox's determination to retire. If this opinion (which is not without plausibility) was correct, the 'immediate destruction' was in this case entirely unintended.

whether of doing good, or working woe. And finally in the next reign he figures as the invincible champion of the Peace of Paris and the immediate cause of the downfall of the Whigs. How many measures in Parliament his zeal and talent sustained would be difficult to enumerate in a matter depending in part upon political jobbery ; but it is interesting to note that he might have crowned his career by receiving the Treasury, had he so desired ; and whether he would not then at last have won an enviable fame—who can say ? As it is, the most that can be said of Henry Fox is that he was perhaps the greatest political manager his country has ever known. Such is the sum and substance of his fame.

But unluckily for Fox's memory, there is nothing in all of this which really denotes the statesman. Our greatest, and perhaps our only, debt to Henry Fox must always be his more celebrated son. A disposition genial and generous, a spirit active and naturally independent, and a mind replete with sound reasoning—such, in brief, was his legacies to Charles James Fox. And yet, while the latter shared most of his father's nobler qualities, he had that virtue which the older man never possessed—a regard for the people, both as individuals, and as a collective unit ; in other words, while his passions, both good and bad, were stronger than his father's, the younger statesman let his sympathies penetrate beyond the narrow circle in which he lived. Great as he

was in politics, Henry Fox achieved but little else, and nothing in public life that is worthy of a people's admiration. His country was no better for his tenure in office, and he neither bequeathed anything in the way of legislative reform, nor left an illustrious example. With a judgement remarkably shrewd,⁷⁰ a power of reasoning that was worthy of the Bench, and a brilliancy that in one sphere might be called genius, Fox made of his life a failure, and it is hard to believe that such a result was inevitable.

For his position in history, we may regard him as simply emblematic of a system of politics in vogue during the middle of the eighteenth century—a system which was bad in itself, and in respect to its influence and effects more pernicious perhaps than one can possibly analyse. Yet, be this as it may, if we are disposed to condemn the English Government at this time, it must be remembered that Great Britain alone of European countries was working out her salvation along the lines of self-government; and if the results were as yet far from perfect, it is equally true that she was giving the rest of the world the benefit of her political and administrative experiments. During the particular period with which the present work has been concerned, administrations were notably corrupt, and the policy of most of them reactionary.

⁷⁰ Richard Cumberland, who must have echoed the general opinion, writes of Fox's 'solid good sense'.—*Memoirs* (ed. 1807), I. 190.

Henry Fox was one of numberless political figures, which played their part in that epoch of transition between the despotism of Walpole, founded upon the system of a skilfully manipulated parliament, and the sovereignty of king and people idealized by the younger Pitt.

APPENDICES¹

APPENDIX A

MEETING OF THE CABINET, AT WHICH NEW-CASTLE WAS NOMINATED FOR THE TREASURY AND FOX FOR THE SEALS.

(Hardwicke Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32870, f. 245.)

Powis House, March 12, 1754.

Lord President	Duke of Argyle
Lord Steward	Marquis of Hartington
Lord Chamberlain	Earl of Holderness
Duke of Devonshire	Lord Anson
Lord Chancellor	

The Lords abovementioned met in obedience to His Majesty's commands, and were acquainted by the Lord Chancellor that the King had been pleased to order such of his servants as are of his Cabinet Council, together with the Duke of Devonshire, to be summoned to deliberate upon the most proper & advisable methods of filling up the vacancies, happening in consequence of the great loss, which His Majesty has sustained by the death of so able & faithful a servant as Mr. Pelham.

The Lord Chancellor further acquainted the Lords that His Majesty had been graciously pleased to open to him his own ideas as to what might be proper to be done on this occasion, and to direct him to communicate them to Their Lordships in order to (*sic*) His Majesty being (*sic*) inform'd of their sentiments thereupon, viz. :

¹ Certain peculiarities of punctuation and capitalization in the original of the following documents are not here retained.

That His Majesty's first idea was that it might be for his service, in the present circumstances, to divide the two offices of First Commissioner of the Treasury & Chancellor of the Exchequer, & to fill the former with some peer of great weight and character, and the latter with some gentleman of the House of Commons of proper talents for it ; that for the first, His Majesty had cast his eyes upon the Duke of Newcastle, who had long serv'd him with ability & integrity, and greatly to his satisfaction, in the office of Secretary of State ; and that for the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, His Majesty had thought of Mr. Legge.

That, as by this means a vacancy would be made in the office of Secretary of State for the northern province, His Majesty had thoughts of laying his commands upon the Earl of Holderness, from whose services he had receiv'd great satisfaction, to change his department of the southern province for the northern.

That to fill up the department of the southern province, His Majesty had cast his eyes upon Mr. Fox, who had serv'd him a great while and much to his satisfaction in the employment of Secretary-at-War.

Their Lordships took these several matters into their serious consideration, & express'd the most dutiful sense of the King's great goodness & condescension, in being willing to know their sentiments upon an affair of this nature and high importance. And Their Lordships do unanimously lay their humble sentiments before His Majesty that the ideas, which he has been graciously pleased to communicate to them, are the most prudent & wise that could be formed upon the present occasion ; and they humbly offer their opinion to His Majesty that (if he shall be so pleas'd) they may be carried into execution, as the most advisable plan for His Majesty's service in this critical conjuncture, and the best adapted to support the system of his affairs upon the same foot on which they have been carried on for several years with great success.

The Lord Chancellor also laid before the Lords a letter, which he had receiv'd this day from the Archbishop of Canterbury, acquainting him with His Grace's opinion to the like effect.

(*Endorsed*) Powis House, March 12, 1754.

Minute of such of the King's servants as are of the Cabinet C'cil, who met, in obedience to His Majesty's commands, to consider of (*sic*) filling up the vacancies happening by Mr. Pelham's death.

N.B. I deliv'd this minute on Wedn., Mar. 13th to the King in his Closet, who read it over deliberately, and entirely approved thereof. His Maj'ty was afterwards pleased to deliver the same back to me to keep.

Mr. Fox did, a few days afterw'ds, decline the offer of Secretary of State, and Sr. Tho. Robinson was appointed.

APPENDIX B

PITT'S DISAPPOINTMENT IN NOT RECEIVING
PROMOTION AFTER THE DEATH OF PELHAM,
—AS DISPLAYED IN A LETTER TO NEW-
CASTLE.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32734, f. 322.)

Bath, March 24th, 1754.

MY LORD DUKE,

I have heard with the highest satisfaction, by a message from Sr. George Lyttelton, the effectual proofs of His Majesty's great kindness and firm confidence in Your Grace for the conduct of his Government. You have certainly taken most wisely the province of the Treasury to yourself, where the powers of government reside, and which at this particular crisis of a general election may lay the foundations of the future political system so fast as not to be shaken hereafter ; but this will

depend upon many concomitant circumstances ; for the present the Nation may say with consolation, *Uno avulso, non deficit alter aureus* ; the power of the purse in the hands of the same family may, I trust, be so used as to fix all other power there along with it. Amidst all the real satisfaction I feel on this great measure so happily taken, it is with infinite reluctance that I am forced to return to the mortifying situation of Your Grace's humblest servant, and to add some few considerations to those, which I have the satisfaction to learn from Sr. George Lyttelton, had the honour to be received by Your Grace and My Lord Chancellour without disapprobation. The difficulties grow so fast upon me by the repetition and multiplication of most painfull and too visible humiliations, that my small share of prudence suggests no longer to me any means of colouring them to the world, nor of repairing (*sic*) them to my own mind, consistently with my unshaken purpose, to do nothing on any provocation to disturb the quiet of the King, and the ease and stability of present and future Government. Permit, My Lord, a man, whose affectionate attachment to Your Grace I believe you don't doubt, to expose simply to your view his situation, and then let me entreat Your Grace (if you can divest your mind of the great disparity between us) to transport yourself for a moment into my place. From the time I had the honour to come into the King's service, I have never been wanting in my most zealous endeavours in Parliament, over the points that laboured the most, those of military discipline and of foreign affairs, nor have I differed on any whatever, but the too small number of seamen one year, which was admitted to be such the next, and on a crying complaint against General Anstruther ; for these two crimes how am I punished ? Be the want of subjects ever so great, and the force of the conjuncture ever so cogent, be my best friends and protectors ever so much at the head of Government, an indelible negative is fixed against my name ; since I had the honour to return

that answer to the Chancellour, which Your Grace and His Lordship were pleased not to disapprove, how have mortifications been multiplied upon me ? one Chancellor of the Exchecquer over me was at that time destin'd, Mr. Fox ; since that time a second, Mr. Legge, is fixed ; a Secretary of State is next to be look'd for in the House of Commons ; Mr. Fox is again put over me and destin'd to that office ; he refuses the Seals ; Sr. Tho. Robinson is immediately put over me, and is now in possession of that great office. I sincerely think both these high employments much better fill'd than I cou'd supply either of them in many respects ; Mr. Legge I truly and cordially esteem and love ; Sr. Tho. Robinson, with whom I have not the honour to live in the same intimacy, I sincerely believe to be a gentleman of much worth and ability. Nevertheless I will venture to appeal to Your Grace's candour and justice, whether upon such feeble pretensions as twenty years' use of Parliament may have given me, I have not some cause to feel (as I do most deeply) so many repeated and visible humiliations. I have troubled Your Grace so long on this painfull subject that I may have nothing disagreeable to say when I have the honour to wait on you, as well as that I think it fit Your Grace should know the whole heart of a faithfull servant, who is conscious of nothing towards Your Grace which he wishes to conceal from you ; in my degraded situation in Parliament an active part there I am sure Your Grace is too equitable to desire me to take ; for otherwise than as an associate, and in equal rank with those charged with government there, I never can take such a part. I will confess, I had flatter'd myself that the interests of Your Grace's own power were so concern'd to bring forward an instrument of your own raising in the House of Commons, that you wou'd not let pass this decisive occasion, without surmounting in the royal mind the unfavourable impressions I have the unhappiness to lie under, and that the Seals (at least when refused by Mr. Fox) might have been

destin'd as soon as an opening cou'd be made in the King's mind in my favour, instead of being immediately put into other hands. Things standing as they do, whether I can continue in office without losing myself in the opinion of the world, is become matter of very painfull doubt to me. If anything can colour with any air of decency such an acquiescence, it can only be the consideration given to my friends, and some degree of softening obtain'd in His Majesty's mind towards me. Mr. Pelham destin'd Sr. George Lyttelton to be Cofferer, whenever that office shou'd open, and there can be no shadow of difficulty in Mr. Grenville being made Treasurer of the Navy. Weighed in the fair scale of usefullness to the King's business in Parliament, they can have no competitors that deserve to stand in their way. I have submitted these things to Your Grace with a frankness you have hitherto been so good to tolerate in me, however inferior. I wou'd not have done it so fully for my own regards alone, were I not certain that Your Grace's interests are more concern'd in it than mine ; because I am most sure that my mind carries me more strongly towards retreat than towards courts and business. Indeed, My Lord, the inside of the House must be consider'd in other respects besides merely numbers, or the reins of government will soon slip or be wrested out of any minister's hands ; if I have spoken too freely, I humbly beg Your Grace's pardon, and entreat you to impute my freedom to the most sincere and unalterable attachment of a man who never will conceal his heart, and who can complain without alienation of mind, and remonstrate without resentment. I have the honour to be with the greatest respect and affectionate attachment,

Your Grace's &c.

W. PITTR.

I cannot hope to leave Bath in less than a week. My health seems much mended by my gout.

APPENDIX C

MEETING OF A CONCILIABULUM (WITH HALIFAX PRESENT), AT WHICH THE RESOLUTION WAS TAKEN TO INITIATE A PLAN OF COLONIAL UNION.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32995, f. 266.)

Minute

Newcastle House, June 13th, 1754.

Present

Lord Chancellor	Earl of Halifax
Lord President	Lord Anson
Duke of Newcastle	Sir Thomas Robinson
Earl of Holderness	

The Lords, having taken into consideration the present state of affairs in North America, unanimously approved the resolution, which Gov'r Shirley mentions in his late letters to have been taken by the Assembly in New England, to drive the French from the river, Kennebeck, and Their Lordships were humbly of opinion that His Majesty's said Governor should be authorized & encouraged to proceed upon the execution of the said plan, as proposed by him, & agreed to by the Assembly of that province, & that the said Governor should be assured that everything recommended by the said assembly should be fully considered, and that immediate directions shall be given for promoting the plan of a general concert between His Majesty's colonies in order to prevent or remove any encroachments upon the dominion of Great Britain.

Their Lordships were likewise of opinion that orders should be accordingly given to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations to prepare forthwith such a plan

of concert as may be proper for the purpose above-mentioned, to be sent to the several governors of His Majesty's Colonies in North America.

N.B. The farther consideration of the affairs of America was postponed till Wednesday next.

APPENDIX D

PORTION OF A LETTER FROM NEWCASTLE TO MURRAY, DISCLOSING LEGGE'S SUGGESTIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32736, f. 592.)

Claremont, Sept. ye 28th, 1754.

DEAR SR.,

I had on Thursday last a very full conversation with Mr. Legge. I began with telling him very sincerely the reasons of my reservedness to him : his discourses about the Whigs, tho' he allow'd me to be a Whig ; his declarations about taking in Mr. Fox, satisfying the Duke, giving Ld. Sandwich a pension, &c., to which I had no objection, but look'd upon these discourses as indications of dissatisfaction *with what was* ; and lastly his complaint of want of confydence from me ; to all of which he did not say one single word, either negatively, affirmatively, or by way of excuse for what had pass'd, or promise for the future. But in a most extraordinary manner (he) said that his opinion was that this Parliament (or House of Commons) would not go on without a minister in it (a cabinet councillor if you will), who shall go to the King *himself*, speak from *himself*.—And then I added, *independently of any other minister*? He said, that as you will, *subordinately*. I said, *those were only words*; I observed to him that this was directly contrary to the King's

present *system*. He said, you will see. And I then told him, *if that was the case*, the King must then find out the person, and I think (tho' I will not be positive) he then said, the cards then must be new shuffled ; he disclaimed meaning himself, said he would do the part of his office as well as he could, but he would not act the *mock minister*. I told him Sr. T. Robinson would inform the House of facts, and I supposed he would take his part in defending them, and in the other branches of busyness. He said, when he was informed, he would do as well as he could, but that very cooly and very slightly. This extraordinary behaviour without one single compliment or profession to me, who had putt him there, did not, however, prevent my communicating to him the plan of the session, all that we intended to do, all that had ever been proposed, both with regard to the national debt, &c., and the reasons for laying aside for the present those proposals. Thus we ended. He told Lord Anson afterwards that I had talked very confydentially to him, that he had told me his opinion and now was easy, *that he would do his best*, but mention'd no particulars. Thus the grand secret is out ; the three great men, Fox, Pitt, and Legge, have agreed upon this principle, that there must be a minister in the House of Commons ; and the first two, or perhaps all three, think they have a chance for it. L. Y. has had a general account of this conversation, and by that I find that this doctrine has been preach'd to her ; the success of it at Court will depend upon the success of it in the House of Commons. I really think it is a cant word given out by these gentlemen, which will affect few or none but those, who, for private views, or private connections, think and act with them. But then the King must see that his busyness can be carried on in the present way, and that I am persuaded it may be, if right measures are taken. Sr. T. Robinson is the profess'd minister ; he may, he will, inform the House of facts, and Mr. Attorney General and those who will join with him can, and I hope will, do the busyness of the

King and the publick. If others without provocation, in high offices, determine to sit silent, for oppose, I think, they cannot in their present circumstances, will the Parliament, will the nation, tell the King that he shall make Mr. Fox his Minister ? for that and that only is the question.

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I am, dear Murray, allways yours,

HOLLES NEWCASTLE.

APPENDIX E

'PROPER FOUNDATION FOR THE NEGOTIATION TO BE ENTERED UPON WITH M. DE MIREPOIX IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS FULL POWERS.'—DATED, FEBRUARY 20, 1755.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32996, f. 34.)

Whitehall, Feby. 20th, 1755.

Present

Lord Chancellor	Earl of Halifax
Lord President	Lord Anson
Duke of Newcastle	Sir Thos. Robinson
Earl of Holdernesse	

Their Lordships, having taken into farther consideration the state of affairs in North America, were humbly of opinion that the following points may be offered as a proper foundation for the negotiations to be entered into with the Duc de Mirepoix, in consequence of the full powers, which he has exhibited, and of such farther instructions as he is expecting to receive from his court.

1st. That with respect to the lands upon the Ohio, and parts adjacent, it be ascertained by specifick lines what

shall be the limits on both sides, leaving an intermediate space to be unpossessed by the subjects of either crown.

2nd. That the territories to be occupied and possessed by Great Britain be bounded by a line to commence on the east side of Canagahogué Bay on the south side of Lake Erie, and to be drawn due south until it touches the 40th degree of northern latitude, and from thence to be continued due southwest until it touches the 37th degree of the said latitude; and that all forts and fortresses erected, and settlements made, by the crown of France or her subjects, to the eastward of the said line, either upon the Ohio, or upon Lake Erie, or in any other part within the extent of the said line from north to south, be abandoned and relinquished, allowing a reasonable time, not exceeding — months, to the officers and subjects of the said crown, to remove themselves and their effects.

3rd. That the territories to be occupied and possessed by France be bounded by a line to commence at the embouchure of the River Miamis on the south side of Lake Erie, and to be drawn south or southwest to the head, or first spring of the river, Oubache or St. Jerome, and from thence to be continued down the said river to its confluence with the Ohio, and from thence due south to the aforementioned 37th degree of northern latitude.

4th. That all the lands and territories lying within the said two lines, within the extent thereof from north to south, be left unsettled or unpossessed by either party, and no (*sic*) otherwise used, or resorted to, but for the purposes of traffick with the natives, which shall be free and open to both without any hindrance or molestation whatever.

5th. That all forts and fortresses erected, or settlements made, by either crown or their subjects within the said territory lying between the said lines, be forthwith demolished, and no other erected or made at any time or upon any pretence whatever.

6th. That proper persons shall be appointed by the respective governors of both crowns within — from the

ratification of this agreement, who shall forthwith proceed to run, mark out, and ascertain the said lines.

7th. That Fort Frederick at Crown Point upon Lake Champlain, as also all forts erected, and settlements made, by the crown of France or her subjects upon the said lake, and upon the river of Niagara, either on the one side or the other between Lakes Ontario and Erie, be demolished and relinquished, and that no other forts be erected, or settlements made, upon the said river or lakes by the Crown of France or her subjects upon any pretence whatever; but a free passage be left to the subjects of both crowns up and down, and to and from, the said river and lakes and countries adjacent, and that they be allowed to carry on reciprocally an open and uninterrupted trade with all the Indians, inhabiting the countries lying around and within the Great Lakes, as well those who are subjects and friends of France.

8th. That with respect to Nova Scotia, the river Penobscot or Pentagoet, from its embouchure to its head spring, and a line drawn from thence due north to the river St. Lawrence, shall be the bounds and limits of the said province to the westward.

9th. That a line be drawn from a certain point on the east side of the said River Penobscot or Pentagoet, at the distance of — leagues in a direct line from the mouth or embouchure of the said river, quite across the continent to a certain point on the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence at the distance of — leagues from Cape Tourmentin in a streight line.

10th. That all the lands and territories lying on the south side of the said line be acknowledged and declared to belong, of absolute right, to the Crown of Great Britain, and that all forts or fortresses erected, or settlements made, by the Crown of France or her subjects, be forthwith abandoned and relinquished, allowing a reasonable time to His Most Christian Majesty's officers and subjects, to remove themselves and their effects.

11th. That all the lands and territories lying on the north side of the said line as far as the River St. Lawrence be left unsettled and possessed by the subjects of either crown, and not to be used, or resorted to, but for the purposes of traffick and commerce with the Indians.

12th. That all forts or fortresses erected, or settlements made, by either crown or their subjects within the said territory be forthwith demolished and abandoned, allowing a reasonable time to their officers and subjects to remove their effects.

13th. All which lines shall be run, marked out, and ascertained by proper persons to be appointed by the respective governors of both crowns within — months from the ratification of the agreement.

APPENDIX F

'SIR THOMAS ROBINSON'S THREE POINTS OF ACCOMMODATION,'—DATED, MARCH 26, 1755.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32996, f. 61.)

First. One line from the Bay of Canagahogué in the lake Erie till it touches the mountains of Virginia to the 39th degree of northern latitude. The French to have both sides of the river Oubache and the remaining part of the Ohio.

Second. The lakes Erie and Ontario, to be put on the foot of the Treaty of Utrecht. That the Five Nations shall be considered subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, and be no more molested on the river Niagara and those lakes, and consequently the forts on the Niagara to be demolished.

Third. A line to be drawn from the Bay of Newbur strait to Fort Chamblé, or the bottom of Lake Champlain, and from thence in a strait line to the western source of the river St. Jean, and from thence to Bay — upon the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The French side to belong to them in full sovereignty ; the other side to the Crown of Great Britain.

N.B. If not left in full sovereignty on both sides, in that case what is left to be neuter ; and only so much of the other side as belongs to Nova Scotia to be neuter except what shall be within the line first propos'd to be drawn at twenty leagues distant from our frontier.

In this last case of the countries to be neuter, Crown Point or Fort Frederick may be demolish'd.

APPENDIX G

RESOLUTION OF A CONCILIABULUM AGAINST A GERMAN ‘SYSTEM’, BASED ON THE INTERESTS OF HANOVER.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32857, f. 491.)

Cockpit, July 30, 1755.

My Lord Chancellor, My Lord President, Sir Thomas Robinson, and the Duke of Newcastle have, in obedience to the King's commands, signified in the Earl of Holderness's letter to the Duke of Newcastle of the 23rd inst., consider'd what assistance may be given to His Majesty for the defence of his German dominions, if they should be attack'd on account of the measures carrying on by the King for the defence of the rights and possessions of the Crown of Great Britain.

They have reconsider'd what the Duke of Newcastle had wrote in his several letters to the Earl of Holderness of the 11th, 18th, & 29th of this month, and they beg leave to adhere to their former opinion with relation to the impracticability of entring in our present circumstances into a general plan, and particularly into that proposed in the *precis*, transmitted in the Earl of Holderness's letter to the Duke of Newcastle of the 6th inst. ; but that all proper assistance should be given for the defence of His Majesty's German dominions, if they should be now attack'd ; which assistance should be confined singly to that object.

That in the uncertainty they are in, what troops His Majesty may think proper, or be able to procure, & on what conditions, as well as what may be the expense of the proposed augmentation of His Majesty's German troops, they cannot possibly judge of the particular expence, and might mislead His Majesty if they attempted it.

But they humbly beg leave to submit it to His Majesty that it may be most advisable that any subsidiary treaties, to be made for this purpose, should be enter'd into by the King, as Elector, as all subsidiary treaties will meet with the greatest opposition, as plainly appears by the damp, which has already been occasion'd by the conclusion of the Hessian Treaty, ev'n among persons very well intention'd for the defence of His Majesty's German dominions upon this occasion.

They therefore humbly hope that His Majesty will be pleased to honour them with his thoughts, what gross sum may be necessary for securing to himself a sufficient force for this service ; and they shall then humbly offer their opinion how far it may be practicable to obtain the same from the Parliament.

They flatter themselves that His Majesty will be assur'd that they will exert their utmost endeavours to procure as effectual a sum as can be obtain'd.

And the better to enable His Majesty to conclude those treaties in his Electoral capacity,—if the princes, with whom they shall be made, should insist upon His Majesty's guaranty, as King, in case they should be attack'd *en haine* of them, they are humbly of opinion that such guaranties should be given.

But, in order the better to effectuate these measures, and to make the more timely provision for His Majesty's assistance, it will be necessary for the Parliament to meet as early as possible ; and the sooner His Majesty shall be graciously pleased to return, these measures shall be the better facilitated.

(*Endorsed*) Cockpit, July 30, 1755. Minute.

APPENDIX H

NEWCASTLE'S OVERTURES TO PITT IN SEPTEMBER, 1755, AND THEIR RECEPTION,—AS RECOUNTED IN A LETTER FROM NEWCASTLE TO HARDWICKE.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32858, f. 408.)

Most secret.

Newcastle House, Sept'r 3, 1755.

MY DEAR LORD,

I never sat down to write to Your Lordship with more melancholy apprehensions of the publick than at present. I see nothing but confusion, and it is beyond me to point out a remedy. I had last night a conference of above two hours & an half with Mr. Pitt. The whole pass'd with the greatest decency, civility, openness, and seeming-friendly disposition on his part. But at the same time there was such a firm resolution, so solemnly declared, both as to persons & things, that, if complied with, must produce a total change of the present system, both as to measures & men.

I began by making him a civil compliment of my desire to assure him, myself, of my sincere inclination to act with the utmost confidence and concert with him ; which he receiv'd and return'd very kindly and properly.

I then refer'd to Your Lordship's conversation with him, and to what you had said to him, both with regard to himself and to publick measures. To my great surprise, & what I thought an ill symptom, at setting out, he had a mind, I should think, that nothing material had pass'd between you, that indeed Your Lordship had touch'd upon several points ; that he could not very well tell what to collect from it ; that he look'd upon it only as a preparatory conversation to that which he was to have with me ; though I found afterwards that every single point had been very properly laid before him. I then proceeded ;

and began by telling him that the disagreeable situation, in which His Majesty was upon his leaving England, from the resolution the King had taken not to yield to the *earnest entreaties* of his servants against his journey ; from the mention that had been made of it in one house of Parliament, & the expectation of it in another ; that these circumstances had made it impossible *at that time* to enter farther into the state of the House of Commons than to beg His Majesty's leave that Your Lordship & I might lay our thoughts before him upon it, at a proper time, and before the next session ; that as soon as the event in North America happen'd, and the resentment, shew'd upon it by France, appear'd, Your Lordship & I took that opportunity to represent to the King in the strongest manner the necessity of forming a system for the House of Commons, and of engaging and enabling him (Mr. Pitt) to take an active part in support of the King's measures there ; that His Majesty in answer had been pleased not only graciously to approve what My Lord Chancellor and I had thus offer'd to his consideration, but had been pleas'd also to authorise us to assure Mr. Pitt of his gracious acceptance of his service & of His Majesty's countenance ; and also, as a mark of it, that the King was willing to call him to the Cabinet Council. He then began his reply ; and with great decency said that the King's countenance was more to him than any other consideration ; but that if it was expected that he should take an *active part* in support of measures, he must be enabled to do it, which he could not think the calling him to the Cabinet Council would, in any degree, do ; that the House of Commons was now an assembly of atoms ; that the great wheels of the machine were stop'd ; that *this* could not be thought sufficient to put them in motion ; that if nothing was required of him but what related to himself, he would very readily, in his present employment, acquiesce in measures, if he approv'd them ; but that I did not know the state of the House of Commons,

which, he might say without vanity, he did better than anybody. He then repeated word for word the same plan & system, which Mr. Legge propos'd to me the last year, viz.: that the business of the House of Commons could not go on, without there was a minister (a subordinate one, perhaps), which should go directly between the King & them ; that if there was any objection to him, he was far from desiring it himself ; that any other person might be thought of ; but that he could not, & would not, take an *active part* in the House of Commons, without he had an *office of advice* as well as of *execution* ; and that was the distinction he made thro'out the whole conversation ; that he would support the measures which *he himself* had advised, but would not, like a lawyer, talk from a brief ; that it was better to tell me so at first ; and (he) repeated the same thing afterwards, or rather applied that to the disapprobation of measures ; that it was true they were all a parcell of younger brothers (an observation, tho' true, I own I had never made before), and that therefore they could not pretend that anyone was fit to succeed my brother or Sir Robert Walpole ; but that the House of Commons must be in commission.

I took great advantage from that expression, and said that *that* was what I wish'd, and that he should be first commissioner. He gave me soon to understand that his meaning was that that person should and must have *an office of advice*. I made, then, some observations upon my own situation, or rather after he had said that if I could be induced to part with some part of *my sole power* ; to that I replied that I knew of no such *sole power* ; that my present station was not my choice, but the King's command. I profess'd my zeal for the King, &c., but that if I was disagreeable to the House of Commons, I should with the greatest duty desire the King's leave to retire ; and that then His Majesty might put one of their own body *at the head of the Treasury*. He said *that* was not at all necessary. He liked a lord, First Commissioner

very well ; but then there must be a secretary of state, a man of ability in the House of Commons, & a chancellor of the exchequer, well supported. He then ran out in the highest encomium of Mr. Legge, that ever I heard of any one man ; that there was the greatest connection between them two, that ever was between any two men ; that Mr. Legge had capacity, ability, *was the child of the Whigs* ; that that connected them together ; that his ill usage & depression had rais'd him in the opinion of every body, & made him the favourite of the House of Commons. He enter'd into an entire justification of his behaviour in not countersigning the warrant for the Hessian levy-money, and thought it very hard that it should be expected of him, without seeing the treaty. I only observed that I believ'd that *that* had never been the practice of the Treasury. He seem'd to make a difference in that respect between the chancellor of the exchequer & the other lords. It is most plain to me that Mr. Legge has been from the beginning the principal instrument of the whole ; Mr. Pitt mention'd by name no one man of the House of Commons but Mr. Legge.

Before I leave this head of personal consideration, I must acquaint Your Lordship that, in describing what was meant by the proposal made to him, I call'd it a *designation*. He laid hold of the word ; and said, as I had called it a *designation*, if it was meant for the Secretary's office, he did not desire, or insist, that it should be done immediately, or before *Monday*. I then was oblig'd to explain my meaning to be no farther than the *designation* of the man of confidence to whom the King would shew his countenance. He then went as fast the other way, and would make me mean that *that* (viz. the Secretary's office) was not intended. I told him plainly (and there we rested it) that our powers went no farther than what I had mention'd at first. He said that if My Lord Holderness was so liked by the King, and Sr. Thos. Robinson, from his knowledge of his business, that they were neither

of them to be provided for elsewhere (and once again I think he said, if I would not find out something else for them), he gave me plainly to understand that then there was an end of everything with regard to his taking an active part in the House of Commons.

We then proceeded to measures,—and here I must own, nothing can equal my astonishment & concern. I explain'd to him fully the strong representations which he had made against a general plan for the Continent & a subsidiary system ; that I knew of but two—the Hessian Treaty, & that which had been long in negotiation with Russia ; and I enter'd fully into the merits of both, and shew'd upon what principles they were made ; that the Hessian Treaty had been originally projected for the preservation of the Protestant religion in that country, for the protection of the King's grandchildren in their religion, for the support of the guaranty given by the King, the King of Prussia, & the States of Holland, & most of the Protestant powers of Europe ; that the danger which threaten'd England and Hanover could not make such a treaty less advisable ; and that in our present situation sure, nobody would think that 8,000 Protestant troops might not be usefully employ'd either here or at Hanover. He talk'd with the greatest respect of Hanover ; said that he would take care, whatever he might do, not to let drop one unguarded expression with regard to Hanover ; but he ridiculed extremely the notion of supporting Hanover with 8,000 men, which was too little if Hanover was attack'd, and a most unnecessary expence without it. I then explain'd the Russian Treaty ; shew'd him that that, if concluded, was the consequence of a four years' negotiation, which had been universally approv'd, & had even been mention'd to the House of Commons with approbation ; and that I thought it would have an odd appearance to drop a negotiation at this time, when perhaps there might be more occasion for it than formerly. Here he replied (and I fancy he has himself said something

in favor of this treaty, which indeed I did not mean, or recollect) this measure might *in time of peace* be approv'd, as a measure for preserving the peace ; but that at present it was the establishing a subsidiary system, which was destructive to this country, and might alienate the people from the present Royal Family. I urged (as is my opinion) the use that was, that might, & that would be made of this treaty (if made) for the preservation of the peace upon the Continent. I told Mr. Pitt that if I was at liberty to show him the representations that had been made against a general plan for the Continent & a subsidiary system, he would not think that we deserv'd to be reproach'd with them ; and I told him in general of the overtures which had been made to keep the King of Prussia quiet. He treated all I said with seeming respect, and made me at times a sort of compliment on the rectitude of my intentions ; but that those distinctions could not stand one moment, when taken to pieces by an able hand,—that this was the universal opinion. What would be the case, he asked, when the Duke of Devonshire should attack the Hessian Treaty in the House of Lords, which he believ'd he would do, and which should be *echoed* by him in the House of Commons ? I told him I knew nothing of what he said of the Duke of Devonshire. He said he knew he dislik'd it, and believ'd he would oppose it (and here I find my little friend, Legge, again). All I could say upon these measures signify'd nothing. He, however, said that if the Russian Treaty was laid aside, and the Hessian Treaty *only* propos'd, as what should stop all other demands of that kind, he might possibly (and once he said he would), out of regard to an act done by the King, acquiesce in that, as an unnecessary thing, useless in all shapes, but to be submitted to on condition there was no other ; but left it with me at last that no consideration *whatever* should make him be both for the Hessian & Russian Subsidy, which determined the measure of *subsidies*.

When I found him so very negative, both as to what

regarded himself *personally*, & the measures, which are, or probably may be taken ; and when he had plainly and invariably given me to understand that, without *he had an office of advice* (which appear'd in discourse to mean only the Secretary's office), he would not take an active part ; and when he declar'd most positively that *no consideration* should make him be for the Hessian & Russian Treaty, I was determin'd that his declaration should not be left with me *only*, and therefore propos'd to him that he & I might wait upon Your Lordship at Powis House on Friday sevennight at night, to see whether we might not explain things more to his satisfaction.

He was extremely polite & cool thro' the whole ; and readily agreed to meet me at Powis House, declaring, however, his resolution ; and that he was persuaded things could not be better or clearer explain'd than I had done it to him. I must end this conversation as I began, that tho' upon every point Mr. Pitt was so determin'd and negative as possible, he acted thro' the whole with great decency, civility, duty to the King, and seeming friendship to me.

Your Lordship, I believe, will agree with me in opinion from this recital (which, I assure you upon my honor, is a true one, neither aggravated nor lessen'd in any one particular that I know) that in the present system of administration we must not expect that assistance from Mr. Pitt, which would encourage any man of common sense to proceed ; and I am very sure that we shall deceive ourselves, if we flatter ourselves with any hopes of an alteration, except the King is pleas'd to make him Secretary of State, whereby he very plainly & honestly told me he should expect to have *voix en chapitre* both as to the recommendation to employments & the determination of measures. And he urg'd the want of a House of Commons minister in the Administration to be the occasion of the subsidiary treaties, now suppos'd to be enter'd into; for that such a minister, by his representations, would have prevented them.

This being the fact, it is now the duty of us all to consider what advice to give the King, upon his coming home. I will very freely fling out to you my thoughts for Your Lordship's consideration. I have seen no body but Sr. Thos. Robinson, and have talk'd a little, in general, to him.

.
In all events I think we should observe the utmost civility to Mr. Pitt, keep very secret what has pass'd with him, and, if we find at our meeting (as I apprehend, will be the case) that he is immovable, I think we may say that if his declining makes it necessary for the King to make use of other hands, he can now have no objection to it, and whatever should be finally resolv'd upon, should not be known to any party concern'd, or to anybody but ourselves, till Mr. Pitt has confirm'd to us his determination.

I am, my dearest Lord, with most unalterable affection,

Ever yours,

HOLLES NEWCASTLE.

PS. To make my narrative perfect, I must add a circumstance or two, which I had forgot. In talking against the Hessians, Mr. Pitt said they were, of all others, the worst ; that they would not fight, when they were in Scotland ; and could we have any hold over the troops of a prince, who had chang'd his religion, and under whose influence these troops would be ? And, in talking about Hanover, I avow'd the measure, and the necessity of defending it if attacked (as in this instance) for English causes, but that that defence should be separated from the object of the Continent. Mr. Pitt said that was impossible, and would understand both Russian & Hessian Treaties, as singly enter'd into on account of Hanover ; and what disservice must it do the King & his Royal Family, when the people of England saw that they could not enter into a war for the support of their own rights without exposing themselves to such consequences ? And

he repeated what he said to Your Lordship, that Hanover could only suffer by being perhaps for a time in the possession of some other prince ; and that even an indemnification would be better given afterwards than such expences enter'd into beforehand.

HOLLES NEWCASTLE.

APPENDIX I

A BIT OF FOX'S WORK FOR THE NEWCASTLE MINISTRY,—AS DISCLOSED IN A LETTER TO LEGGE.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32859, f. 323.)

Holland House, Oct'r. the 2d, 1755.

DEAR SIR,

You know that His Majesty has declar'd his intention to make me Secretary of State, and to give me the conduct of his affairs in the House of Commons.

You have hitherto call'd the majority of that assembly together as usual at the Cockpitt to hear H.M.'s speech, and the words prepar'd for the address in answer to it. If you have a mind to do so now, I shall indeed be extremely glad. But I am afraid you will not ; & it may not perhaps be proper or pleasant that another should. I see some difficulty (I imagine so at least) that you will meet with in deciding either way, which, when you have consider'd, I will wait on you, if you will give me leave, to know as much of your opinion in this regard as you shall think fitt to impart to

D'r Sir,

Yours &c.,

H. F.

I will come to you whenever you will appoint, after Sunday sennight, when I shall return from Lord Digby's, where I am going to-morrow or Saturday.

APPENDIX J

A GLIMPSE OF FOX AS A SELF-CONFESSED
BRIBE-GIVER.

(Letters to Peter Collinson, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 28727, f. 42.)

FRIEND,

I am really greatly oblig'd to you for your good advice. But you are not rightly inform'd. Friend Pitt is as warm as I am, but he tickleth & pleaseth more, as you term it, because he is a much better speaker than I,—that is the truth of it, I assure you. But tickling the palm, not the ear, is the business now, and he that can do the first is the best orator, let him speak ever so ill.

I fear Perkins's place is above our interest to procure, were our interest better than it is. Who have you to begin sollicitation with the D. of Newcastle ? I'll give all the assistance I can, I promise you.

Adieu. Y'rs,

Jan. 25, 1756.

H. F.

APPENDIX K

FOX'S MESSAGE TO THE KING, EXPRESSING HIS
INTENTION TO RETIRE ; IN READING WHICH,
THE KING UNDERLINED THE PARTS WHICH
GAVE HIM MOST DISPLEASURE.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32868, f. 303.)

Some months ago, speaking of the impossibility of gaining over Mr. Pitt at a less rate than making him Secretary of State, I told the Duke of Newcastle (& afterwards said to the Chancellor) that whenever that should be His Majesty's pleasure, I would readily resign, take an inferior employment, & give all the assistance I was capable of.

Ten days ago Lord Barrington put me in mind of this,

& told me that the Duke of Newcastle had the day before said that if he was sure it would not offend me, His Grace would offer my place to Mr. Pitt the next day. I, at Lord Barrington's desire, told the Duke of Newcastle again that whenever it was His Majesty's pleasure, I was ready.

I hope this is in negotiation ; for, tho' I have behav'd in the best manner I have been able to, the D. of Newcastle, yet I find that my credit in the House of Commons diminishes *for want of support, & think it impracticable for me to carry on His Majesty's affairs there, as they ought to be carry'd on* ; and therefore beg leave humbly to acquaint His Majesty that I wish some new arrangement may be made, in which, if His Majesty thinks me worthy of any employment, not of the Cabinet, I will attend and give all the assistance I can in Parliament.

H. F.

October 13, 1756.

(Endorsement,—in Holdernesse's writing). *Mr. Fox to the King*, delivered to the Duke of Newcastle by Ld. Holder-nesse, part of it having been underlined by His Majesty, and by the King's express command the Duke of Newcastle is to preserve it.

Kensington, Oct. 15th, 1756.

APPENDIX L

AN ACCOUNT OF THE NEWCASTLE MINISTRY'S OVERTURES TO PITT IN OCTOBER, 1756, AND THEIR RECEPTION,—IN A MINUTE BY HARDWICKE.

(Hardwicke Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 35870, f. 263.)

Powis Ho., Octr. 24th, 1756.
Sunday night.

Mr. Pitt came to me by appointment.

I acquainted him that I sent (*sic*) to him by the King's command ;

That I had very faithfully & very fully related to the King the exact substance of what had passed between him & me on Tuesday last ;

That I was sure I had omitted nothing that was material ;

That I related to the King the strong professions, which he had made, of respect & duty to His Majesty, & zeal for his Government, & for the support of his real service, as nearly as I could in his own words.

Mr. Pitt interposed & returned me many thanks for doing him this justice.

I then told him that I had done this on Wednesday last ;

That on Friday the King ordered me to attend him upon Saturday ;

That I did so, & on Saturday, the King, in his Closet, had ordered me to give him an answer, which His Majesty himself had dictated to me, & I would deliver it to him in His Majesty's own words :

'The King is of opinion that what has been suggested is not for his & the public service.'

Mr. Pitt then bowed, & said His Majesty did him the greatest honour in condescending to return any answer to any thing that came from him ; & desired that I would assure the King of his high sense of it in the most dutiful manner.

I promised him that I would do so to-morrow.

He then repeated over the answer, & I did so again to him, in the very same words that I had done before without the least variation.

He then desired that I would recollect that all that he *had suggested* was by way of objection ; that he had not *suggested* any thing *affirmative* as to measures of any kind.

I told him that I had related it to the King exactly according to the heads, which he had recapitulated at the end of our former conversation, which I also would do again briefly to him :

1. That it was impossible for him to serve with the Duke of Newcastle.

2. That he thought enquiries into the past measures absolutely necessary ; that he thought it his duty to take a considerable share in them, & could not lay himself under any obligation to depart from that.

To this I said that the King was not against a fair & impartial enquiry.

3. That he thought it his duty to support a militia-bill ; & particularly that of the last session.

I told him that the King & his Ministers were not against *a militia-bill*.

4. That the affair of the Hanoverian soldier he thought of great importance ; that what had been done ought to be examined, & he thought censured.

5. That if he came into His Majesty's service, he thought it necessary, in order to serve him, & to support his affairs, to have such powers as belonged to his station ; to be in the first concert & concoction of measures ; & to be at liberty to propose to His Majesty himself any thing that occurred to him for his service, originally, & without going thro' the chanel of any other minister.

He admitted that these were truly the points—& then desired, or hinted to be informed, whether this was to be considered *as an answer to the whole*.

I told him that I related the answer in the King's own words : It was the King's answer ; & I could add nothing to it, nor take upon me to explain it ; that I understood that he was to take it *as answer to every thing that had been conveyed by him, Mr. Pitt, to the King*.

He then repeated his deep sense of the King's condescension in giving him any answer.

But he would say to me, only as *from one private gentleman to another*,—that he would not come into the service, in the present circumstances of affairs, upon any other terms for the whole world.

I then said that undoubtedly he must judge for himself ; but I would also say to him, *as from Lord Hardwicke only to Mr. Pitt*,—

That, as he professed great duty to the King & zeal for his service, & I dared to say had it ; that as he had expressed an inclination to come into His Majesty's service, in order *really* to assist in the support of his Government ;

That as he was a man of abilities & knowledge of the world ; that, as men of sense, who wish the end, must naturally wish the means ; why would he at the same time make *the thing* impracticable ?

To this he answered that he would say to me, *in the same private manner*, that he was surprized that it should be thought possible for him to come into an employment to serve with the D. of Newcastle, under whose administration the things he so much blamed had happened, & against which the sense of the nation so strongly appeared ; & I think he added, which administration could not possibly have lasted, if he had accepted.

In answer to that I said some general things in the same sense with what I had mentioned on that head on Tuesday last.

He then rose up & we parted with great personal civility on both sides.

N.B. (by the second Earl of Hardwicke). I find no minutes of the Tuesday conference, unless I have any report it (*sic*) of it amongst my letters. H.

(*Endorsement.*) Relation of my Conference with Mr. Pitt, Octr. 24th, 1756. Sunday night.

Read to the King in his Closet at Kensington, Tuesday, Octr. 26, 1756.

APPENDIX M

CIRCUMSTANCES OF FOX'S RESIGNATION IN 1756,
AND THE FAILURE OF HIS EFFORTS TO FORM
A MINISTRY.

(Letters to Sir C. H. Williams, Brit. Mus., Stowe MSS., 263, f. 4.)

London, Novr. 10th, 1756.

MY DEAR SIR CHARLES,

When I wrote last to you, I sent you a large cargo of pamphlets & political papers, most of them pretty full of abuse upon the Administration. Soon after I sent that letter I went into the country, where I staid with Lord Ilchester at Maddington, Redlynck, & Farley near six weeks. Before I went I knew that Mr. Fox was extremely ill treated as a Minister by the Duke of Newcastle, who had the King's ear & the sole power. His Grace took a great deal of pains, I believe, to set the King against Mr. Fox, & kept him in a total ignorance with regard to measures of the greatest consequence. This was usage hardly to be born by a man of honour, which, together with the bad times & the clamour of the people (who involved him in the blame of measures which he never approved) made him desirous to get out of the post of Secretary of State, & he contrived to let the Duke of Newcastle know that he was ready to give it up upon very easy terms, if His Grace could get Mr. Pitt or any other proper person to take the Seals. His Grace took no notice of this for some time, but about six weeks ago Lord Barrington came to Mr. Fox & asked him whether he was really willing to resign the Seals, & said that the Duke of Newcastle told him that he would offer them to Pitt, if he thought Mr. Fox would not take it ill. Mr. Fox told His Lordship that he was very ready to part with them. Then upon the settling of the Prince of Wales's family & the disposal of some other vacant employments,

many of which were in the House of Commons, he settled it all with the King without ever talking to Mr. Fox, & shewed him a list of them as they were fixed. With regard to my brother (who is now a lord of the bed-chamber to the Prince of Wales) His Grace told him that he ought to be infinitely obliged to him, for the King was very averse to giving it to my brother, & made use of some strong expressions, which shewed but too evidently how much he, Mr. Fox, had been misrepresented to His Majesty. This conversation [space] between Mr. Fox & the Duke of Newcastle passed the day before he came down to Maddington. There we talked it all over ; Mr. Fox seemed much struck with the difficulty & disagreeableness of his own situation. He received some letters from the Duke of Newcastle while he was there, which did not make him think at all the better of it. He seemed to think that as His Grace did not trust him, & shewed no favour to his friends in the House of Commons, his credit must sink there ; that the clamour of the people in the country was very violent ; that it was hard to bear the blame of measures concerted by other people ; that it was disagreeable to support unpopular measures for a king who had shewn so great a dislike to him. These considerations made him determine to resign. So he drew up a paper stating the impossibility of going on in the same way things then were with the Duke of Newcastle & declaring at the same time that far from wishing to distress the King's affairs, he was willing, if any new arrangement could be made, to accept of an employment out of the Cabinet, & would support His Majesty's measures, in whatever hands he thought proper to trust them. This paper was delivered by Lord Granville to the King the 13th of Octr. His Majesty was at first very angry, the Duke of Newcastle & the Chancellor were distressed, & the latter sent for Mr. Pitt & said all he could to make him accept of the Seals ; but his demands were excessive high ; and he declared that on no terms, nor in no service,

would he act with the Duke of Newcastle. After this His Grace offered the Seals to Lord Egmont, who declined accepting of them. During this time I came to town, & for the first two days I was here I thought the Duke of Newcastle would have been bold enough to have tried to stand alone without one able man in the House of Commons ; but he was better advised and this day fortnight the King sent for Mr. Fox & told him the Duke of Newcastle had determined to retire ; bid him talk to Mr. Pitt and other considerable people & see if he could not carry on his affairs. Since the Duke of Newcastle's retreat, it has been a most extraordinary scene & varied so often that it is hardly possible to relate all the turns it has had. The day after Mr. Fox was told the Duke of Newcastle would retire he met Mr. Pitt at Saville House & they talked a good while, & from that conversation Mr. Fox concluded that he would not act with him. He sent to Legge & found that Pitt & he were connected, & by the conversation he had with Lord Bute there was but too much reason to think that they acted in concert with Leicester House. This was done in the two first days after His Grace of Newcastle's retreat. The third day the Duke of Devonshire came to town. His Grace was sent by the King to Mr. Pitt to know what his demands were. He told His Grace that he would not act with Mr. Fox as a minister ; that he desired to be Secretary of State & that all the people that went out with him should be reinstated in as good employments as they lost last year. This seemed more reasonable than any thing he has said either before or since. I must here tell you that notwithstanding Mr. Fox was so ill with the King a month ago, he has been a great favourite ever since the Duke of Newcastle's retreat, & His Majesty is so averse to letting Pitt & Legge come about him that he would be glad to make Mr. Fox his minister if he would undertake it. But he considered the danger & difficulty as very great if he took it with this formidable Opposition, backed by

Leicester House & supported by a violent clamour which, the Duke of Newcastle & the Chancellor being retired, would be pointed at him solely, as he would be the only object. Add to this that he must support almost the whole debate himself, for he has nobody that can be called an able speaker to second him. This, together with the probability of bad news arriving every day, made him doubt whether he would take the post of Minister, or sit quiet & let it go into other hands. Upon this foot it remained some days, when Mr. Pitt wrote a very extraordinary letter to the Duke of Devonshire to say that he thought My Lord Holdernes should go out & begged he might have the northern province. He said likewise that he had persuaded Lord Temple to take upon him the arduous task of First Lord of the Admiralty. This revolted the King extremely, & he seemed very desirous not to have Pitt come near him. Then it was proposed that the Duke of Devonshire should be at the head of the Treasury & Mr. Fox his Chancelor of the Exchequer. If this scheme had gone on, it was provided that there should be a meeting of the considerable people of both Houses of Parliament in and about town ; that after His Majesty should have sent Mr. Pitt word that he was determined always to name his own Treasury himself ; that he had appointed the Duke of Devonshire First Commissioner of it & Mr. Fox Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that the rest of Mr. Pitt's demands, excessive as they were, should be complied with. And if Mr. Pitt refused to come in upon these terms, they were to support the King's dignity & set him at defiance.

For about 3 hours on Tuesday, the 2nd inst't, I thought it would have gone so. But that night His Grace of Devonshire declared he would not be at the head of the Treasury upon any account whatsoever. So the whole system was then as much afloat again as ever.

Now you will be surprized. When His Grace of Devonshire had been in with the King the next morning, he told

Mr. Fox that he was at last determined to take the Treasury & have Legge for his Chancellor of the Exchequer, & in short to comply with all Mr. Pitt's demands except that of removing Lord Holdernes. He said he thought this was the only way to have things quietly settled. He offered Mr. Fox to be Paymaster, which he declined. The Duke of Devonshire has certainly shewn himself to be very weak & irresolute upon this occasion & not so good a friend to Mr. Fox as I thought him. I wish Legge (whom I believe to be a great rogue) has (*sic*) not influenced His Grace. But Mr. Fox thinks the Duke of Devonshire means well in all this & thinks it for the good of the country ; but His Grace is certainly very weak.

Thus you see Mr. Fox was reduced to this choice, whether he would be Minister in this storm with a violent opposition backed by the Prince of Wales & supported by the clamour of the people for our past misfortunes, which will be encreased by the news of those we have but too much reason to expect will follow ; or whether he would let it go into other hands. He has determined to decline the administration, and I own I am one of those who think he was in the right ; for besides the many difficulties I have stated above, it must be remembered that the Duke of Newcastle who is strong in the House of Commons would certainly do him all the harm he could.

I must say that the King is still very averse to Mr. Pitt &c., and would gladly make Mr. Fox Minister if he would undertake to carry on his affairs. But as he chose not, the Duke of Devonshire went to Mr. Pitt to tell him that the King had consented to make him First Commissioner of the Treasury & Mr. Legge Chancellor of the Exchequer ; that he should have the Seals ; but that the King would not part with Lord Holdernes, and could not give him the northern province ; & that the rest of his demands should be complied with. This Mr. Pitt, after considering some time, agreed to.

So now the great seal is to be put into commission, the

Treasury as above, Pitt, Secretary of State, & Lord Temple, at the head of the Admiralty. When this scheme was first publickly known, it occasioned great surprize, & the general opinion is that it cannot last ; & by what I hear they find people very shy of joining them. I own I have great doubts whether it will do, but I believe these people are mad enough to try it.

Mr. Fox seems quite easy though he says there is nothing for him & his friends to like in this turn of affairs. I think nobody could reasonably advise Mr. Fox to go on with the Duke of Newcastle in the way he was used ; & after he had once sent the King word that he would resign, he was obliged to be guided by the different incidents that arose. The only good end I ever thought it could have was that Mr. Pitt & Mr. Fox should join as ministers ; but as the former absolutely refused that, I own I never liked the idea of Mr. Fox's being sole minister in this storm as I have before described it. If the Duke of Devonshire had not taken that very extraordinary turn of joining with these people, they certainly could not carry on the Government. All the reasonable impartial people I have heard of wished for a junction of Fox & Pitt, but the latter would not at all come into it & has shewn himself to be extremely impracticable & unreasonable throughout this whole transaction, & in all the treaties that were carried on he seemed rather determined to conquer than assist the King. Mr. Fox, on the other hand, was very ready to join with him on easy terms, which has gained him great credit among those that know the particulars of the whole transaction.

There are various opinions about the part Mr. Fox has at last taken. Some, 'though not many, think he had better have been Minister & think he would have found strength enough to have braved the storm formidable as it would be. Others who dislike Mr. Fox's present situation advised him by no means to be the Minister. Some I know, & sensible men, who think that this was the only part

Mr. Fox could take; and are of opinion that the Administration now forming cannot last, and that they will be obliged to call on Mr. Fox for assistance before the sessions (*sic*) is over. Harris dislikes it all extremely & has desired me to tell you that he is so hurt with it that he hopes you will excuse his writing as yet. We are to be quiet & let these people try whether they can manage things better than those they have so loudly blamed for these last two years ; but as I hear the Duke of Bedford is violent, I suppose he will oppose in the House of Lords, & Rigby in the House of Commons. The Duke of Newcastle's people, & others who wish Mr. Fox ill, seemed rejoiced at this & say that by endeavouring to ruin His Grace he has undone himself. Bad as things have turned out for us, I am [of] opinion that it is better for him than going on with the Duke of Newcastle, & I hardly think it was practicable for him to take the whole upon himself & carry it on with any degree of honour & credit ; & I am sure it would have been attended with great difficulty & danger. Mr. Fox himself seems satisfied that he has done right & indeed he all along declared that he would upon no account whatsoever take upon himself to be sole minister of this country particularly in such times.

I think I have now given you as full as I am able of this very extraordinary scene, which seems now to be closing ; and I don't see how any thing more can be said about it 'till the opening of the sessions, & then I will certainly write to you again.

In the midst of this confusion & division at home our affairs abroad seem to go as ill as possible, & I fear they will go on so, let who will conduct & direct them.

My brother is come to town to kiss hands as Lord of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales. He looks pure well again and proposes going out of town as soon as the ceremony is over.

The beginning of this letter was wrote, as you will see by the date, on the Birthday. I will add another date to it

whenever I send it, which shall be as soon as Mr. Fox has actually resigned the Seals. He gave a very handsome dinner to five & twenty people on the Birthday at the Duke of Richmond's house in Privy Garden, where he intends to be all this winter ; & as he will be out of place, he letts his own house & will never be in town except when he attends Parliament.

Saturday, 13th November.

The Duke of Newcastle resigned on Thursday & had a grand levee yesterday. Mr. Fox resigns to day, Lord Anson on Monday, & the Chancellor on Friday next. So the new Administration will be settled within this week. Mr. Fox goes down to Wooburn to morrow, & as soon as he comes back from that jaunt he proposes staying at Holland House till the Parliament meets. I shall go down to Redlynck & be there & at Sherborne 'till the meeting of Parliam't.

I am &c.
H. DIGBY.

APPENDIX N

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF NEWCASTLE'S DOWN-FALL (IN MAY, 1762),—AS RELATED BY HIMSELF IN A LETTER TO SIR JOSEPH YORKE.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32938, f. 239.)

Most Secret

Newcastle House, May 14, 1762.

DEAR SIR,

I shall now, as well as I can, inform you of the many incidents, which have happen'd to induce me (with the advice of my friends, the Duke of Devonshire, My Lord Hardwicke, and My Lord Mansfield) to take the resolution (which I have executed) to desire the King's leave to

retire ; tho' I shall not put it into execution till after the Parliament rises.

After the unhappy motion made by the Duke of Bedford for the immediate recall of the British troops from Germany, which he & others asserted, had been absolutely promised them, tho' no particular time was mention'd by the Administration (My Lord Bute), I have watched His Lordship narrowly ; and have always feared that sooner or later that fatal measure would be taken, which I have endeavoured to stave off by all the management I could.

The better to bring this about, an encrease of expense, be it ever so little, was objected to ; and I dared not propose any for fear of it's being turned upon me, as I have mentioned in my letter to Prince Ferdinand, a copy of which I enclose to you, and which I desire you would communicate with my most respectful compliments to Prince Louis. On this plan Lord Bute was glad to lay hold of any difficulty, or unreasonable demand, that was flung in his way ; and the ill judged conduct of the King of Prussia, in the reserve he show'd in explaining himself to the King, & in concealing his instructions to his minister, Baron Goltz, at Petersburg ; and many silly & provoking (tho' not altogether undeserved) gross reflections made upon My Lord Bute, in all his correspondence with his Ministry here, animated His Lordship to be glad of any opportunity to keep the King of Prussia at a distance, in order to have the more pretence to deny the subsidy, and by that means to give a fatal blow to the German war.

At last, all these considerations put together determined His Lordship to give an absolute negative to the Prussian subsidy, and even to grow cool and indifferent about Russia for being, in His Lordship's opinion, too much attached to the King of Prussia, whom my old friend, My Lord Granville, called the greatest enemy the King had.

This question remained undecided so long, that I was, at last, forced to desire My Lord Bute, that the King's servants might have an opportunity of giving their

opinion upon a question which some of them thought of such importance to this kingdom in the present situation of our affairs.

Accordingly, at a meeting at My Lord President's, where were present My Lord Chancellor, My Lord President, the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Newcastle, My Lord Bute, My Lord Hardwicke, My Lord Egremont, My Lord Ligonier, My Lord Mansfield, and Mr. George Grenville,

The Duke of Devonshire, My Lord Hardwicke, & myself were most strongly for giving the subsidy ; and urged such arguments for it, as, I may say, were not, & I think, could not, be answered ; the chief of which were the losing all the advantages, which the happy turn in Russia has given us ; the almost certainty of having such success, this campaign, as must end in a general, good peace ; whereas the refusing the subsidy would make us two more great & considerable enemies, the Czar & the King of Prussia ; when the late ungrateful & insolent answer of the Court of Vienna to the friendly insinuations made them by the King proved there was nothing to be expected from them ; and when the loss of Russia & Prussia might prevent the success of our secret negotiation with France, which otherwise might very probably be brought to a happy issue, and that soon.

This step taken, I did imagine that the recall of our troops from Germany, and the total abandoning of the German war was determined without any thing of that sort having been said to me. A most remarkable & offensive transaction soon clear'd up this point, and shew'd that the point was determined, if we had not our separate peace with France before.

I found a popular (as it was thought) preference was to be given to the Portugal war ; the Queen's brother-in-law, General Townshend, and all the favourites were to go there, as the favourite service. I hear Count La Lipp had the offer of the command the moment after he had quarrel'd with Prince Ferdinand, & had left the army.

The King's message about the vote of credit, which is to put an end to the session, was to be hasten'd ; and great parade made of Portugal ; and the vote of credit, as I apprehended, to be confined to Portugal only.

I went on, my own way, made my own schemes with My Lord Barrington, and, as they had refused the 670 m. to the King of Prussia, I intended to pay off some part of the extraordinaries already incurr'd by a million to be raised now upon the sinking fund, and to leave the million vote of credit for Portugal & other necessary services, according to emergencies. And this scheme was founded upon the necessity the Treasury would be under to have the second million in some shape or other, if the war was to go on this campaign.

As I had flung out this, in some of our meetings, Mr. Grenville first shew'd it would interfere with his measure of putting an end to the German war in the middle of the campaign ; and My Lord Bute & he determined the King to insist with me, when I proposed the other million, that no more than one million should be asked. I urged the necessity of it ; I produced a paper to prove it ; but all to no purpose.

In order to defeat me, My Lord Bute & Mr. Grenville engaged part of my own Treasury against me, and quoted to me their opinions, viz. Mr. Oswald, Mr. Elliot, & that worthy man, Mr. Martin, the Secretary : They not only quoted them against me, but sent regular questions to Mr. Martin to have his answer in writing ; and particularly one paper, where Martin is to state the savings that would arise from putting an end to the German war at the end of June, July, August, Septr. & so on. So that the officers of the Treasury were to furnish materials from the Treasury books against the opinion & measure of the First Lord of the Treasury, not only as to the money to be raised, but also as to the very material publick measure for the recall of the troops, contrary to my known & declared opinion ; and without saying one word to me of

it ; or the Secretary giving me the least notice of it ; tho' he has since thought proper to send me the papers ; and therefore I have the proofs in my own hands.

After this unprecedented and unbecoming usage to me in my own office, I don't suppose any man of sense and honor can think I should stay in the Treasury. I therefore took the resolution, by the advice of my friends abovemention'd, to declare to the King that I would not suffer any question to be brought into Parliament ten days before their rising, that would occasion a flame there, in our present circumstances ; which must be the case, if Mr. Grenville, His Majesty's Minister in the House of Commons, was (as he had declared he would) to oppose the measures of the Treasury ; if some of my own Board were (as I had been informed) to join with him in that opposition ; and, if My Lord Bute was also, as he had declared, against me in opinion in that question ; and that therefore I desired His Maj'y's orders to direct My Lord Barrington to propose the one million vote of credit, as usual.

I acquainted My Lord Bute personally with what I intended to say to the King ; and added that I also thought it my duty to acquaint His Majesty that after what had passed, particularly in this affair, and the opposition I had met with from Mr. Grenville, the House of Commons Minister, and some of my own Board, it was impossible for me to be of any service to His Majesty in the Treasury ; and that therefore I should hope His Majesty would allow me to retire, and would be thinking of such a disposition of my employment as His Majesty should judge proper.

My Lord Bute was very reserved—never said he was sorry, nor used one single argument to dissuade me from it ; but only said *that* would hurt our Peace, for my friends would be against the Peace ; to which I said, No, My Lord, In employment & out I shall equally be for the Peace. I like your Peace, tho' I don't like *your war*, meaning his silly maritime war ; and that is all of consequence that passed with His Lordship.

From My Lord Bute I went directly to the King ; and after having fully explained the treatment I had met with, in my own office, and the part I had taken, to acquiesce in order to preserve peace and union the little remainder of this session, in what seem'd most agreeable to His Majesty, was approved & supported by My Lord Bute, & insisted upon by Mr. Grenvile, I took the liberty very fully to shew the King that, under these circumstances, it was impossible for me to be of any service to His Majesty in the Treasury ; and that therefore I hoped he would be so good as to make such a disposition of my employment as he might think proper.

The King was extremely civil and gracious ; wished I would reconsider it, which His Majesty often repeated. I only answer'd, I hoped His Majesty would remember what I had taken the liberty to say to him. And since that (Friday last) I have not seen My Lord Bute, nor heard from him, nor has His Majesty said any thing farther to me on the subject.

The Duke of Devonshire & My Lord Mansfield have talked the affair over with My Lord Bute, with great goodness & friendship to me, & with great apprehension of what might be the consequence to the publick, if this event should happen. His Lordship treated it to them both as a determination of mine ; that the thing was over ; *the Duke of Newcastle was determined* ; and did not give the least handle to either of them, to endeavour to make it otherwise ; which, as well as his late conduct in every thing towards me, shows plainly that it had been *his determination* for some time to use me so as to make it impossible for me to continue in employment with ease or honor or with any utility to the public.

This being so, the resolution I have taken must take place upon the rising of the Parliament, which, I suppose, will be in less than a fortnight. I have made a fair trial for the sake of the King, the publick, & my friends ; long experience has show'd that I can be of no use to either ;

and I scorn at my age, after 40 years' service, & I hope, having gain'd some reputation both abroad & at home, to be walking about Court, an insignificant cypher. This, I hope, all my friends, both at home & abroad, will agree to be reasonable ; and therefore I hope they will approve the resolution which I have taken.

In business, that is, foreign business, upon which every thing depends, the Duke of Devonshire, My Lord Hardwicke, & I only come to Council to be overruled. The Duke of Devonshire has said to My Lord Bute that he will attend Council no longer,—that is, after I have resigned my employment ; and I dare say My Lord Hardwicke will do the same ; for the attendance there, in our late circumstances, has been very disagreeable to him for some time.

My Lord Bute's schemes for foreign affairs are very different from ours ; popular, maritime expeditions in war, & a total dislike of all continental measures are the basis of his politicks.

These differences of opinion in essentials make it impossible for us to draw together,—even less than with Mr. Pitt; for tho' he had all that popular nonsense about him, he mixed with real system, & backed it with a continental support, which had sense in it, if we could have carried on the war for some time upon the foot of such immense expence. My scheme was to make our push this campaign, whatever it might have cost ; and I would have carried it on every where, whatever might have been the expense ; and I would have seen at the end of this campaign what general peace we could then have made ; and for this purpose, when the Court of Vienna rejected so haughtily our pacifick insinuations, I would have made all the possible use of Russia & Prussia, given the King his subsidy, & assisted him wherever I could to advantage. In the meantime I would have carried on our secret negotiation with France.

APPENDIX O

A GLIMPSE OF FOX'S CRUSADE AGAINST THE
POLITICAL POWER OF NEWCASTLE—AS RE-
VEALED IN A LETTER FROM NEWCASTLE
TO HARDWICKE.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32945, f. 312.)

Claremont, Decr. 19th, 1762.

MY DEAR LORD,

I am under the greatest pain in writing to Your Lordship at present, tho' my heart is so full that I cannot avoid it.

Your Lordship, I suppose, hears of the great violences, which My Lord Bute & his agent, Mr. Fox, are carrying on against every man that is supposed to belong to, or have any connection with me ; and that I am singled out from the rest of the world, & particularly from those with whom I have acted, & in conjunction with whom I am still acting.

I never expected any regard would be shew'd to myself for having spent all my time, & all my fortune, in support of this Royal Family ; *that*, I suppose, is my crime. My heart is almost broke from the cruelties, with which they are treating poor, innocent men, in order to be revenged on me. They intend to turn out poor Sir Fra. Poole's eldest son from being Commissioner of the Excise, to make room for My Lord Gower's friend, Mr. Vernon ; and I hear also that his youngest son is to be removed from being a clerk in the Treasury, tho' he is undoubtedly one of the best clerks there. This goes to my heart,—a poor old man in the eightieth year of his age, who has not an enemy in the world, to be actually turned (*sic*) a (*sic*) starving, with two very valuable young sons & one daughter. This would melt the hearts of any ministers but these.

These cruelties & violences would not be carried out against my friends *only*, if My Lord Bute & Mr. Fox did not see me abandon'd by almost all my friends of consideration & consequence. They think they may do what they please with me ; they see their majority in both Houses ; and nobody in the House of Commons to support a joint measure taken by us all.

I saw from the beginning that *my friends in the House of Commons were condemned* ; that I did not, & do not, complain of, tho' the resentment is confined to my friends *only* ; but their carrying their resentment so far as to remove all my friends & relations from offices, not in the House of Commons ; and where the objects of their resentment could not offend ; particularly in such a cruel instance as that of poor old Sir Francis Poole's sons, of as ancient a family as any in the kingdom ; men valuable & amiable in themselves, turned at once out to starve, is, I say, such a stretch of power as is hardly constitutional, & justifies me in firmly believing that no man is, or can be, a true friend of mine, *who shall remain in office*, shall aid, support, & abet ministers capable of using me & my friends in this outrageous manner.

To conclude, I must beg Your Lordship to let me know what your family finally intend to do. I felt, as I ought, for the cruel treatment of the Duke of Devonshire ; I resented it, as became me ; I hope others will feel for me, & resent it accordingly.

Since writing what is above, My Lord Villiers & my cousin Pelham came to me, & have acquainted me with many more cruelties that are to be inflicted upon my friends & relations. Mr. Fox declares he will not spare one single man. To-morrow is the day of execution.

My cousin, Harry Pelham, is to be turned out of the Customs ; poor Jack Shelley to have his Custom-house place (which my brother gave him in trust) taken from him ; poor Jack Butler, to lose his employment held in the

same manner ; and his trustee, who held it for him, to be removed from another employment, which he held in his own right. And in short, Mr. Fox is inquiring after every employment where I had placed any one of my friends. I am to be removed from my three lieutenancies ; my good friend, & Your Lordship's, My Lord Northumberland, is to have Middlesex & Westminster ; my friend & relation, the Duke of Kingston, Nottinghamshire ; and the *good* Duke of Richmond, Sussex.

There is to be quite a new Admiralty, Lord Digby, Lord Carysfort, Your Lordship's friend Mr. Harris, Sir George Pococke, and Admiral Coates, in the room of Admiral Forbes, who has a pension ; Mr. Hunter has the Jewel Office ; Mr. Stanley is to have something ; & My Lord Villiers & Tom Pelham turned out.

My nephew Onslow is turn'd out for Lord Charles Spencer ; poor Wilkinson, *the only one in the Ordnance*, turned out for Sir Edward Winnington. I hear Mr. Cox was offer'd to succeed him, which he declined, on account of his election ; he might have given *a better reason*.

The Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Grafton, & the Marquess of Rockingham are also to be removed from their respective lieutenancies. If this list of insolences, insults, & affronts are (*sic*) not sufficient to engage my friends to declare themselves so, I must say it is but a slender friendship they have for me.

I dine with my nephew Onslow on Tuesday next ; as I come to town that day to attend the Duke's levée, where I have not been this year. I intend to wait upon Your Lordship in the evening ; pray receive me kindly & pity me ; for I ought to be an object of *Your Lordship's* pity and compassion.

I am, &c.,

HOLLES NEWCASTLE.

(Extract from a PS., dated Dec. 20th.) If we are all removed from our lieutenancies, & this persecution of all

my friends in the under offices is pursued,—against persons to whose charge no ill conduct can be laid, might it not be made a proper cause of complaint in the House of Commons ? Especially, when the behaviour of the members in the House of Commons, who shall be removed, is notoriously the occasion of the one & of the other. Is not such an extent, or ill use of power as cognizable, & as much to be blamed as the exerting a power, which does not belong to the Crown or those acting under it ?

APPENDIX P

THE OPINION THAT BUTE'S SUDDEN RETIREMENT WAS PRECIPITATED BY FOX,—AS EXPRESSED IN A LETTER FROM DEVONSHIRE TO NEWCASTLE.

(Newcastle Papers, Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32948, f. 86.)

Newmarket, Ap. 9, 1763.

MY DEAR LORD,

I receiv'd Your Grace's letter about four o'clock this morning. An express came for Ld. Northumberland in the night between Thursday & Friday ; the messenger reported yt Ld. Bute had quitted, which gave the first alarm. I found by Lord Gower that there was some foundation for it. Genl. Fitzwilliams had a letter by the post from Mr. Fox, telling him that he had claimed a promise which the King had given him when he undertook the management of the House of Commons, namely that he shou'd retire to ye H. of Lds. at the close of ye session, if he desired it ; that this had produced an event which had surpris'd him, Lord Bute's retiring. Fitzwilliams asked the Duke whether he shou'd tell Fox that he had show'd him the letter. He answered he might say that he had thank'd him (Mr. Fitzwilliams) for telling him the news ; the Duke's opinion (& by the manner he relates the purport of

Mr. Fox's letter, I am of the same mind) is that Lord Bute's giving up the Treasury is occasion'd by Mr. Fox's leaving him, & that he undoubtedly means to be the Minister behind the Curtain, & that this is an experiment to see whether he can govern this country in this mode, as it was plain he cou'd not long maintain himself at the head of the Treasury. We are very clear that this system will be of short duration, that we have nothing to do but to keep quiet & firmly united, & to wait to see what turn things will take ; the D. of Grafton is entirely of the same opinion.

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I am &c.

DEVONSHIRE.

APPENDIX Q

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SPECIAL INDEX : HENRY FOX

Fox, HENRY, Sources for study of, i. 5-8, 11, 382-6; letters of, where found, i. 6-7; dispatches of, 7; *Memoirs of*, 7-8; Walpole on, 27, 46; personal appearance of, 27; point of comparison with father, 30 (1705-43); mother's advice to, 31; birthplace of, 31; at Eton, 31-32; enters and leaves Oxford, 32; gambling and dissoluteness of, 32; Latin correspondence of, with Lord Hervey, 32 n 11; avidity of, as a reader, 32 n 11; defeated for the Commons, 33; a receiver-general of the revenues, 34; dis-taste of, for Jacobitism, 34; joins the Whigs and Walpole, 35; political acuteness, 36-37; enters Parliament, 36-37; Surveyor-General of the Works, 37; marries Penelope Dyves, 38; on case of Captain Porteous, 38-39; moves the Address in the Commons, 39; opposed to army reduction, 39-40; defends the convention with Spain, 40; defends Walpole after his fall, 41-42; clashes with Pitt over Hanoverian mercenaries, 42-43; as a debater; attitude of, toward Pelham, 46; (1743) a Lord of the Treasury, 46; (1744) elopes with eldest daughter of Duke of Richmond, 47; pardoned and received by the Lennoxes, 49; (1745) pleads for Vice-Admiral Lestock in the Commons, 54-56; gains credit for his efforts, 57; Horace Walpole on ability of, 57 n 58; Fears advance of Young Pretender, 58-59; opposes Pelham in regiment scheme, 60-61; (1746) Secretary-at-War, 68; (1747) advises cessation of the war, 71; illness of, 72; (1748) candidate for Secretaryship of State, 74-76; reputation of, for marked ability, 76; praises Treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle, 78-79; diligent and tactful, 79; (1749) candidate for Treasurership of the Navy, 80; as a politician and orator, 81; member of the Cumber-

land Party, 89; on the Duke of Bedford, 91; (1750) said to favour a system of subsidies, 94; loyal to Pelham, 95, 106, 123; on revision of sentence by court martial, 97-98; (1751) in Trentham election case, 99-101; defends Anstruther, 103; action of, on Foreign Protestants Bill, 104-5; remark of, about Pitt, 105 n 33; gaining in popularity, 106; suggests removal of Prince of Wales to St. James', 108; criticizes Regency Bill, 110-13; contempt for the legal profession, 111 n 42; loyalty to Cumberland, 113; votes for Regency Bill, 114; conversation with King on, 114-15; careful of his connexions, 115; advises Bedford to resign, 116; as ward of Richmond's sons, 116 n 53; becomes leader of Cumberland Party, 119; cordial relations of, with King, 119-21 n 63; to Rigby, on Granville, 120; tells Cumberland the King's remarks, 121; speech of, on the reduction of number of scamen, 123 n 67; (1752) cavalier attitude of, toward Pelham, 123-4; reputation of, at highest point, 126; (1753) speeches of, on the Clandestine-Marriage Bill, 128-34; clause suggested by, legitimizing children, lost, 130; resentment of, for desertion of Walpole, 134-35; Hardwicke's indignation at, 135-36; Pelham on controversy of, with Hardwicke, 137 n 86; (1754) interest of, in Kildare, 138-39; political aspirations of, 141-42; canvass of, to succeed Pelham, 144-47; found out, 148 n 112; called odious by Pitt, 151 n 121; Secretary of State, 154; Newcastle's promises to, broken, 160-63; declines the Seals, 162; interview of, with the King, 165-66; harbouring remorse, 172-73; returned for Windsor, 176; should, according to Pitt, have been at the head of the Commons, 178; willing

to serve with Pitt, 178 ; stirs latent conspiracy, 181-82 ; complains to the King of Holderness, 181 ; patronized by Lady Yarmouth, 182 ; 'hero of the Whigs', 184 ; in Newcastle's 'system', 191-92 ; action of, on fitting out the regiments for America, 198-202 ; Hardwicke's criticism of, 202 n 130 ; holds conferences with Pitt, 202 ; alliance of, with Pitt, 204-5, 209 ; not invited to Newcastle's dinner, 206-7 ; claims of, urged by Legge, 207 ; against Newcastle in election cases, 208-9 ; lashes Robinson in election debate, 212 ; confers with Pitt, 213-14 ; summoned by the King, 215-16 ; Newcastle's negotiations with, 215-22 ; confers with Cumberland and Pitt, 220-21 ; admitted to the Cabinet, 222 ; Waldegrave on, 222 n 180 ; (1755) Hardwicke undermines, 226 ; states his position as regards Newcastle, 229 ; suspected of intrigue, 233-34, 237 ; motion of, on 'King Charles's Day', 238 ; on Sheriff-depute Bill, 239 ; asked to win over Onslow, 240 ; in the St. Michael election case, 240-41 ; prevents Paulet's action, 252 ; has 'lead' in Parliament, 253 ; intimate with Granville, 254 ; outspoken enemy of French, 260, 261 ; orders ships equipped, 260 ; hostility to Newcastle, 261 ; controls Cabinet policy, 266 ; responsible for the war spirit, 267 n 101 ; wants a powerful navy, 273 ; questions Anson about Hawke's instructions, 281 ; regrets having signed them, 282 ; Pitt to, on Newcastle, 289 ; Pitt's break with, 290, 291-92 ; pleased at Newcastle's failures, 296 ; Newcastle on, to the King, 300-301 ; condemns Hessian Treaty, 306, 320 ; influence of, over Kildare and Hartington, 314 n 57 ; advice of, to Hartington, 315 ; on subsidies, 316, 320 ; alleged overture of, through Granville, 323 ; has not signed ratification of Hessian Treaty, 323 ; denies making overture through Granville, 324 ; wants Digby returned for Tiverton, 326-27 ; intimate with Granville, Murray and Sloane, 333-37 ; connexion of, with Granville's campaigning, 334 ; efficient

in office, 335 ; an autocrat in military patronage, 335 ; overtures of Newcastle to, and negotiations with, 336-37 ; estimate of, 338 ; to be Secretary of State, 340 ; political work of, for the ministry, 340-62 ; tells King he will support the Treaties, 341 ; and Newcastle pleased with each other, 343 ; circular letter of, to members of Commons, 348-50 ; presides at the cockpit, 362 ; Walpole's *mot* on, 363, 367 ; criticism of, from a political standpoint, 365-67 ; reply of, to Pitt, 369 ; quizzes Pitt on rivers simile, 367 ; receives the Seals, 371 ; defends his circular letter, 372-73 ; battle of, with Pitt on question of seamen, 373-76 ; on prizes for sailors, 377-78 ; on increase of army, 378-79 ; tribute of, to Bedford, 378 ; canvassing for the Treaties, 380-85 ; thirst of, for power and money, 381 n 30 ; as a bribe giver, 385 ; relations with Newcastle, 385-86 ; in debate on Russian Treaty, 387-88 ; gains commendation, 388 n 55 ; Temple's taunt to Hardwicke regarding, 388 n 57 ; has saved the subsidies, 389 ; in the negotiations with Prussia, 389 ; departmental duties of, 391-93 ; powerless to influence the Cabinet, 393 ; (1756) conduct of, in case of Gen. Shirley, 393-95 ; a poor administrator, 395 ; reply to offer of peace from Rouillé, 396-97 ; on Knowles' case, 397 ; on a 'disjointed ministry', 397-98 ; reply of, to Townshend on American affairs, 399-400 ; works for the success of the Plate Bill ; on unpreparedness for war, 404 ; on inertness of the people, 409 ; zealous in supporting the King's measures, 410 ; Pitt on, as sole Minister, 411-12 ; a hopeless minority in the *Conciliabulum*, 412, 420 ; urges defence of Minorca, 413 ; connexion with the Minorca affair, 413-34 ; warning to Wall through Keene, 419 ; Spain's tribute to, 419 ; lacking in executive capacity, 420 ; submits to Militia Bill of the Opposition, 423 ; message of, to Granville through Murray, 426 ; proposes negotiations with Spain for exchange of Gibraltar for Minorca, 433-34 ; to

Devonshire on his disagreeable position, ii. 5-6; Newcastle's attitude toward, 7; on Murray's leaving the Commons, 8 n 5; misrepresented to the King, 12, 19, 25, 33; interviews with the King, 13; coldness of King to, 13 n 21; quarrel in Closet over Yerke, 15-16; on grounds of King's opposition to Earl of Bute, 19; anxiety of, over the effect of 'Minorca', 20; requests interview with Newcastle, 20-21; advice of, to the Ministry, 21; meeting of, with Hardwicke, 22; contempt of, for public opinion, 22, 52 n 137; coalition of, with Pitt, proposed in *The Advertiser*, 22-23; emphatic for Bute, 23-24; ill, 24-25; insists on concession to Bute, 25; convinces the King, 26; vigorous politics of, worries Newcastle, 26; outlook of, in Parliament, 27-28; distrust of colleagues, 28; clings to office, 28-29; definitely falls out with Newcastle, 30-34; statement of grievances to Stone, 34; sends Newcastle notice of intended resignation, 35; activity of, preparatory to resigning, 36-48; the King's rage at, 41; promise of, to King, 42; interview with the King, 42-43; wishes Pitt 'might come', 44, 74; writing explanations to friends, 47-48; going for last time to *conciliabulum* of enemies, 48; resigns, 50; asks for 'any employment not of the Cabinet', 51; for the Pay Office, 52-53; on Pitt's advocating money for Hanover, 55; against Byng in Commons, 58-59, 62; (1757) fierce attack of, on Pitt for breach of privilege, 60-62, 63-64; on Court-Martial Bill, 62-63; complimented by Townshend, 63; defends Newcastle Ministry in Minorca inquiry, 68-69-70; supports Militia Bill, 70-71; (1756) anxiety of, over situation, 74; asked by King to see Pitt, 75-76; meeting of, with Pitt, 76-77; makes overtures to Legge, 78; on quarrel and reconciliation of Pitt and Bute, 79; dinner and conference of, with Bedford and Marlborough, 80-81; consulted on Pitt's list, sends one of his own, 82; for the Exchequer in Granville's plan, 85; futile plot of, against

Pitt, 85-88; declines offer of Pay Office, 87-88; politic concessions and position of, 88-89; resents 'insolent proposal' of Navy Treasuryship, 92; resigns the Seals, 93; warns Devonshire against Newcastle, 94; asks peerages for wife and son, 95; Bedford's loyalty to, 96-97; persuades Bedford to accept, 98; wins fight for borough against new administration, 98-99; asks office of Surveyor of Works for Hamilton, unsuccessfully, 100; anger of, at First Lord, 100; denies responsibility for the *Test*, 101; retires to the country, 106-7; returns, 107; on weakness of the Ministry, 110; Pitt takes up Gibraltar scheme of, 112 n 137; (1757) illness of, 115; defends old Ministry, 115; and Court-Martial Bill, 116; vain efforts of, to form ministry for King, 117-24; planning vengeance on Pitt, 119; granted a reversion, 120; City loud against, 121; King insists on, for Paymaster, 127; thought of for Vice-Treas. of Ireland and peerage, 130; disgusted at the wrangling, 131; independent ultimatum of, regarding Pay Office, 132; second attempt of, to form a ministry for King, 136-42; reception of Walpole's proposals, 238-39; on failure of proposed ministry, 143; in suspense, 143; receives the Pay Office, 144; end of rivalry with Pitt, 146; political merits of, compared with Pitt's, 148; ambition of, buried, 154; difficulty in getting re-elected for Windsor, 154-56; seeks peerage for Lady Caroline, 157; letter of, to Newcastle in behalf of Fowke, 157; visits Cumberland, 159; may have said Pitt 'broke windows with guineas', 165 n 42; (1758-59) wanted by the King for Pitt's place, 167; rumour of overtures by, to Leicester House, 168; opposes Habeas Corpus and Navy Bills, 170; defence of Tyrawly by, 170-71; (1760) approves Pitt's objection to the King's speech, 182 n 76; (1761) asks peerage for Lady Caroline through Cumberland, 183; praised by King, 183; receives promise of peerage from Bute, 184; with Kildare on question of a new Irish

Parliament, 184–86; in the episode of George III and Lady Sarah Lennox, 187–89; eldest son of, received by the King, 190; to Bute on his getting the Seals, 195; on the French proposals, 198; on Pitt's ‘murtherous’ expedition against Belle Isle, 199–200; despises the populace, 208; feelings of, toward Bute and Pitt, 209; asks Shelburne's aid *in re* peerage for Lady Caroline, 210–11; Bute to, on promise of, 211; Bute's negotiations with, 212–14; agrees to support the Administration, 214; becomes a ‘King's Friend’, 215; to Bute on necessity for peace, 216; returned to Parliament, 216; (1762) on Barré's attack on Pitt, 221; to Walpole on who are Whigs, 223; prevents motion for withdrawal of British troops from Germany in the Commons, 226–27; rumour of, succeeding Newcastle, 234–35; criticizes Bute for turning out Newcastle, 225; apparently suggested Dashwood's nomination, 235; confidential adviser to Administration, 238; at ‘Kingsgate’, 238, 240; receives reversion in Ireland, 240; for a clean sweep of Newcastles opposing separate treaty, 242; on the dislike of Bute, 243–44; popular abuse of 244–45; on offending Cumberland, 245; talk of, with Bute, 246; on Bute's desperate situation, 247–48; deceives Cumberland, 249; declines to accept offer of Seals, 249–50; fixes a settlement, 251; interview of, and break with Cumberland, 252; to receive a peerage, 253; declared Cabinet Councillor and H.M. Minister in Commons, 253; motives of, for return to politics, 255–57; takes responsibility for the Peace of Paris, 257; to Cumberland on father's Ministers excluding themselves, 258; attends meeting of *Conciliabulum*, 259; to Devonshire on the King's removing him from the Council list, 260–61; protest of, to Bute, 261; offers Spanish embassy to Sandwich, 263; perplexed over disposition of the Peace, 264; political work of, for the Peace, 266–70; standing for re-election on opening day, 270; retort of, to Legge, 271; poor

health of, 272 n 173; great triumph for, 273; saves the Peace, 273, 283; annihilates the Whigs, 275–78; (1763) attacks enemies in the Ministry, 280; eager to retire, 280–81; declines offer of Treasury, 284; recommends Grenville, 284; dispute over Shelburne's assumption of the retirement of, from Pay Office, 285–87; reply to Bute's excuse of ‘pious fraud’, 288; ‘mad haggling’ of, 288 n 216; Rigby's cruel treatment of, 289–90; lament of, 290; a peer as Lord Holland, 290; journey of, to Paris, 291; withdraws from active politics, 292; wealth of, and its origin, 292–95; bequests of, 294–95; extravagance of sons, 295; (1764–74) loses the Pay Office, 295–96; thirst of, for an earldom, 296–98; bitterness against, 298–99; accused of defaulting, 299–300; lovable in private life, 301–2; indulgent to his children, 302; children of, 302 n 27; Trevelyan on, 303–4; pride of, in son Charles, 304–5; facility of, for making friends, 306–8; loyalty of, to Walpole, 308 n 40; outlives most of his friends, 308; failing health, 309, 312; efforts of, to complete *Memoirs*, 309; not the author of the *Spendthrift*, 309; letter of, to wife on leaving Pay Office, 310 n 43; feels no remorse for past, 310; on Rigby, 311; death of, 311–12; reveals his humour on death-bed, 312; tributes to, 312; survey of career of, 313–34; question of ‘honesty’ and ‘good nature’ of, 313–14; governmental theories of, 314, 315; career of, as manager, 317–19; appeal of, to royal power, 319–20, 321; indifferent to constitutional phases, 320; contempt of, for populace, 322–23; had no regard for the constitution, 323–24; unpopular because of his wealth, 325; product of the period, 325, 331; sacrificed his nobler ambitions for wealth, 325–26; a political adventurer, 327–28; lacked moral breadth and soundness, 328; few exhibitions of statesmanship of, 329; a peerless party manager, 330; as a debater, 330 n 68; great ability of, 331–32; made his life a failure, 333; position in history, 333–34.

GENERAL INDEX

Abreu y Bertodano, Felix José d', Letter of, on Fox, i. 347; ignorant of efforts of Austria at Madrid, 419; reports French intent of descent from Dunkirk, 433; Wall's confidence in, 433; presents demands for Spain, ii. 174.

Act of Grace, i. 72, 103.

Admiralty, and Minorca, i. 418, 420; Byng case before the, ii. 57; incapacity of, under Pelham rule, 149; restored to fitness, 150.

Aix-la-Chapelle, Treaty of, concluded, i. 78; Fox's approval of, 78; nothing but a truce, 242, 257.

Albemarle, William Anne Keppel, 2nd Earl of, i. 140; French ambassador, 260.

Amelia, Princess, i. 88; letter of Newcastle to, 91.

America, Pelham Administration takes no interest in, i. 70; Bedford's interest in, 69-70, 91 n 9; the colonists and the French in, 193-94, 257-59; situation in, aggravated, 258; negotiations with Mirepoix over, 262-68; demands of England regarding, 262, 263, 264-66; Fox on protecting, 405; England has secured the disputed territory in, ii. 200. *See also Colonies.*

Anson, Lord, on Fox's ability and prospects, i. 76; some measures of, dropped, 96; succeeds Sandwich at Admiralty, 121; interferes with Fox, 201; on instructions to Hawke, 274-75, 281; inefficiency of, 416-17, 422; to propose materials for defence, ii. 10; indolence of, condemned in *Advertiser*, 22; dismissed, 50, 371; spite of, against Byng, 66; articles of impeachment against, 92; urged by Hardwicke for Treas. of Navy, 130; returns to Admiralty, 144.

Anstruther, Gen. Philip, i. 102-4. Argyll, Archibald Hamilton, 3rd Duke of, Fox and, i. 382; enlisted to influence Bute, ii. 23-24.

Army, Enemies of Walpole seek to reduce the, i. 39; Fox for augmenting the, 40, 404.

Arundel, Richard, to be bought with an Irish pension, i. 382.

Attorney-General, *see Murray, William.*

Augusta, Princess of Wales, to be Regent and guardian of George (afterwards George III), i. 108-9; jealous of Duke of Cumberland, 108; victory of, 113; entices the Tories to return to Leicester House, 142; opposed to Fox for First Minister, 147; informed of Fox's elevation, 156; dreads a Fox-Newcastle reconciliation, 186-87; alarmed at Fox's victory, 228-29; prejudices Prince of Wales against the King's match for him, 285; resents Cumberland and Fox being in the Regency Council, 285; Cumberland visits, and proposes taking nephews to the fleet, 285; consent given and withdrawn, 285-86; suspected of being behind the Fox-Pitt rupture, 292; assures Pitt of protection and support, 297; hostile to Newcastle, 299; asked to help Newcastle secure Pitt, 306; forbids Lee to accept office, 311; anger at Fox, 344-45; Earl of Bute a favourite of, ii. 16-17; Fox accused by Newcastle of paying court to, 19; using influence against Fox, 190; libels against, 243.

Austria, Diplomatic coercion of, i. 16; war of, with her neighbours, 19; British interests sacrificed to, 20; a stepping-stone for Carteret, 21; attempts to settle differences between England and, 242-43; furnishes an annual subsidy to the Estates-General of Holland, 243; relations with England strained, 246, 249; hope of accommodation ended, 251; obdurate, 296; in secret negotiation with France, 409; Treaty of Versailles con-

cluded, 409; approaches Spain, 419; consults Russia before joining France, 437. *See also* Maria Theresa.

Baker, Alderman, i. 360.

Barré, Col. Isaac, *Début* of, in speech against Pitt, ii. 219-21.

Barrier Treaties, *The*, i. 243.

Barrington, William Wildman Barrington, 2nd Viscount, candidate for Secretary-at-War, i. 72; a Pittite, 142; Newcastle on his appointment, 339; to be Secretary-at-War, 340; motion of, on Russian Treaty, 386; instructions to Fowke, 418, 427; reprimands and removes Fowke, 430; tells Fox of Newcastle's thought of offering the Seals to Pitt, 31; helps Fox to re-election, 155-56; Chancellor of Exchequer, 196; refuses to resign at request of Newcastle, 262.

Bath, Earl of, *see* Pulteney, William.

Bavaria, i. 254.

Bavarian subsidy, Pelham consented to the, i. 93; Pitt defended the, 95; treaty expiring, 248.

Beauclerk family, Efforts to win over, to Fox, ii. 154-55.

Beckford, William, alderman, defends Fox, i. 373; goes over to Pitt, 397 n 76; exonerates Fox in the Commons, ii. 54.

Bedford, John Russell, 4th Duke of, made First Lord of the Admiralty, i. 50; scheme for raising troops, 60; plan of, for conquering Canada, shelved, 69-70, 198, 258; accepts the Seals for six months, 77; close friend of Sandwich, 87-88; characteristics of, 91; satellites of, show contempt for Pelham, 105; gaining in popularity, 106; outvoted by Pelhams, 107; Newcastle begs for removal of, 107; gives support to Regency Bill, 109; dismissed, arraigns Newcastle in the Closet, 118; attacks the Saxon Treaty, 123; opposes the Clandestine Marriage Bill, 127; member of the Cumberland Party, 140; repulses Lyttelton as messenger from Newcastle, 209-10; assails the Ministry, 266-67; arouses the war-spirit, 267 n 101; on the subsidies, 318 n 72; fought for by both sides, 354; wishes Newcastle's destruc-

tion, 355; wary of Potter and Temple, 355; the Ministry's overtures to, 355-59; believes in sea war, but condemns subsidies, 355; unwilling to be part of Newcastle Administration, 356; acquiesces in Hessian Treaty, 359; desires to speak for the Address, 362; following of, supports Administration, 370; Fox's tribute to, 378; secured through Sandwich's appointment, 383-84; votes for Treaties, 385; promises aid, 410; on the Minorca fiasco, ii. 28; favours pardon for Byng, 65; advises Fox to get out, 74; urged by Marlborough to mediate between Pitt and Fox, 75; dinner and conference with Fox and others, 80-81; interview with the King, 83; on Granville's plan, 85; Fox urges, to accept the Lord Lieutenantcy of Ireland, 86; ardent loyalty to Fox, 96-97; angry at Devonshire, demands rewards for Fox, 97; accepts Lord Lieutenantcy, 98; offered the Treasury in new Ministry, 118; part of, in the attempt of Fox to form a ministry, 139-43; Fox tries to mollify, 143; troubles of, in Ireland, 172-73; more closely allied with Newcastle, 173; burned in effigy in Ireland, 185; permitted to retire, 193; letter on Pitt's objections to the French époques, 199 n 135; proposes armistice with France, 201 n 141; forced out of Cabinet by Bute, 205; moves in the Lords the withdrawal of British troops from Germany, 225-26, 372; has not the sympathy of the Court party, 226; declaring for peace, 238; envoy to France, 241; with Bute on surrender of Havana, 242; friction with Bute, 259, 282; repulses overture from Newcastle, 282; friendship for Fox, 307; Fox's breach with, 307 n 39.

Belle-Isle, Charles Louis Auguste Fouquet, *Duc de*, plans expeditions for France, i. 403.

Belle Isle, Pitt's expedition against, ii. 199-200.

Bestuzhev-Ryumin, Mikhail Aleksis Petrovich, great chancellor of Russia, i. 316.

Blakeney, Gen., William Blakeney,

Baron, defender of Minorca, i. 414, 430.
 Board of Trade, i. 195 n 103, 392-93.
 Bolingbroke, Henry St. John, Viscount, i. 84, 86.
 Boscowen, Admiral Edward, assigned to intercept French fleet, i. 269; Mirepoix deceived about, 270; sails, 271; reinforcements sent to, 271; captures but two French vessels, 278; attack by, causes consternation in France, 283-84; sent to reinforce Hawke, 420; Anson protests against weakening, 422; delay in dispatching, 423.
 Braddock, Gen. Edward, selected to command troops for America, i. 200; defeat of, 327, 341; Fox in controversy over, 331.
 Bribery, Profuse, at elections, i. 177; Pitt's attack on, 211; Newcastle without funds for, ii. 190-91; more rampant, 217; of members of Commons, 269-70; system of, 315-17; Newcastle delegates, to a manager, 316-17; limit of the system, 320-21. *See also* Corruption.
 Bristol, George William Hervey, 2nd Earl of, ii. 206-7.
 Brodrick, Admiral Thomas, i. 423, 427.
 Bunbury, Sir Charles, ii. 226-27.
 Bussy, François de, i. 284.
 Bute, John Stuart, 3rd Earl of, confidential adviser of the Princess, i. 297; seeks to acquire the 'Cousinhood' for Leicester House, 297; quickly-developed dominance at Leicester House, 367; wanted by Prince of Wales as his Groom of the Stole, ii. 16-17; opposed by the King, 17; scandal regarding, in connexion with Princess, 19-20; or Pitt indispensable to the Administration, 20; mortified by refusal, 24; the King offers a pension to, 25; King sends key to, 78; quarrel of, with Pitt, 79; beset by politicians, 94; conference of, with Newcastle, 126; persuades Pitt to yield on Exchequer, 133; efforts of, to undermine Pitt, 162; intrigue with Legge, 163; attacks on Pitt, 165; interview with Pitt, 166; quarrel with Pitt, 169; declines the Seals offered by George III, 177; leader of the 'King's

Friends', 178; draft of King's speech criticized by Pitt, 182; given seat in Cabinet Council, 182; chief dispenser of favours, 182; promises peerage for Lady Caroline, 184; planning marriage for the King, 189; desires a Tory Parliament, 190; believes he can make Newcastle resign, 193; on the prospect of Pitt's retiring, 193; appointed Secretary of State, 194-95; on Holderness's ignorance of what Pitt is doing, 196; resents Galitzin's sending dispatches to Pitt, 196-97; allies himself with Newcastle, 197; first conference of, with Pitt, 197; obstructions of, to negotiations for peace, 202-3; cold to Newcastle's threat of resigning, 204; conduct of, forces Devonshire and Bedford out of Cabinet, 205; promise of, to Fox regarding peerage, 211; Bute on, 211 n 157; wants Grenville to lead in Commons, 212; definite promise of, to Fox, 213-14; belligerent attitude of, 216; determines to break alliance with Prussia, 224; demands an 'accommodation' from Berlin, 225; on Newcastle's intriguing, interfering with Newcastle's appointments, 230; opposes Newcastle on vote of credit, 230-31; forces his resignation, 231; on the severance of alliance with Prussia, 233-34; honours heaped on, 234; would make separate peace without reference to Spain, 241, 242; concerned over problem of Havana, 241-42; unpopularity of, 243-44; Fox to, on Cumberland's views, 246; desperate situation of, 247-48; overtures to Fox, 249; Fox's warning to, regarding Newcastle, 250, 258; thanks to Fox, 253; friction with Grenville and Egremont, 259; discouraged at unpopularity, 265; hopes of, hang upon Fox, 265; great victory, 273; begins the general rout, 275-76; protects the Yorks, 278; storm redoubled against, 281; contemplates retirement, 282; tired of unpopularity, 283; offers Treasury to Fox, 283; resigns, 284; excuses Shelburne, 288; attitude toward Fox, 287-9; importuned by Fox, 296 n 17.

Byng, Admiral John, sent to Minorca, i. 414; instructions to, 417; reply of, to instructions, 417-18; five ships sent to, under Brodrick, 422-23; at Gibraltar, 426; Fowke departs from orders, 427; defection of, 428; after indecisive battle, retires, 429; deprived of command and placed under arrest, 430; outcry against, 431; Newcastle wants trial and execution of, ii. 10; popular outcry against, 54; case of, 55-67; a scapegoat for Newcastle Ministry, 56, 65; court martial convicts, of negligence, 56-57; case of, before Admiralty, 57; case of, in the Commons, 57-64; Fox against, 58-59, 62-64; move of Captain Keppel for, 59; Cabinet meeting on, 59-60; Pitt's report of respite for, 60; appeal for, 62; King would not pardon, 66-67; death of, 67; effect of the case of, on the Administration, 113; Fox's cleverness in case of, 331.

Cabinet, The, submissive to the dominant interest, i. 23; Newcastle's power in, 71; a united, impossible, 89; quarrels in, watched by Fox and Pitt, 94-95; under Newcastle control, 155; project for union of the American colonies proposed in, 195 n 103; settles questions of colonial policy, 203; Cumberlands have five votes in, 231; rebellion in, 241; meeting of, on Anglo-French relations, 261; dominated by Cumberland, 262; demands on France without concessions, 264, 266; resolves on war, 269; takes measures to intercept French fleet, 269; action of, on matters in Ireland, 313 n 56; aid of, for Minorca, 418, 420; deprives Byng and West of their commands, 430; excitement of, over Byng's conduct, 430; Prussian Treaty the one creditable work of, ii. 5; meeting to discuss loss of Minorca, 11; lack of co-operation with Fox, 21; meeting to discuss Byng, 59-60; incapacity of, under Pelham, 149; Pitt's ascendancy in, 173; discord in the Whig, 180; first, of George III, 180; the King's

speech considered by, 182; sustains Bedford on question of a new Irish Parliament, 185-86; Pitt the guiding spirit in, 198; rejection of the *époques* by, 199 n 135; Bute divided, 202; committed to negotiations with France, 203; the fisheries as the stumbling-block of, 204; led by Bute, 205; resents Pitt's arrogance, 206 n 146; loth to trust Pitt, 206 n 147; differences in, regarding peace, 225; necessity for harmony in, 228; continues the Prussian subsidy, 229; Hardwicke and Devonshire retire from, 233; purged of an obstructive element, 235; Mansfield has no voice in, 238; almost unanimous, 241; no further Peace difficulties in, 259; minutes of meetings of, 335-37.

Calcraft, John, Fox's secretary, ii. 44 n 109; influence of, ii. 268; on Fox's giving up Pay Office, 285-86; enriched by Fox, 289.

Campbell, Hume, friend of Fox, i. 350; the King objects to, 359; made Registrar of Scotland, 381-82; speeches in debate on Treaties, 387, 388; refuses to accept office, ii. 136.

Canada, Hope of conquering, deferred, i. 70; Cumberland urges conquest of, 393; conquered during the Pitt Administration, ii. 150.

Canterbury, Thomas Herring, Archbishop of, i. 153.

Cape Breton Island, i. 70.

Carlisle, Frederick Howard, 5th Earl of, author of the *Spendthrift*, ii. 309.

Caroline, Lady, *see* Fox, Lady Caroline.

Caroline, Queen, i. 338.

Carteret, John Carteret, Lord, *see* Granville, 2nd Earl.

Cavendish, Lord George, ii. 261-62.

Chancellor, The, *see* Hardwicke, Philip Yorke.

Charles VI, Emperor, i. 244.

Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, landed in Scotland, i. 58; advance of, 58-59; success of, at Falkirk, 62.

Chatham, Earl of, *see* Pitt, William.

Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of, on Fox's mar-

riage, i. 49 ; Pelham confers with, 50 ; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 50-51 ; in Prince of Wales's faction, 51 n 51 ; violent for peace, 71 ; appointed Secretary of State, 71 ; effort to secure a favour through Fox and Lady Yarmouth, 73 ; resigns, 74 ; on Fox as successor to Pelham, 147, 150 n 120 ; ironical remark on Newcastle, 343-44 ; on the next session, 353 n 159 ; predicts a Fox-Cumberland Administration, ii. 26-27 ; to Hardwicke and Newcastle on Fox's difficult task of defending Ministry, 27 ; on the Byng controversy, 64 ; on Pitt's enemies, 111-12 ; on Fox's friends, 307 ; estimate of Fox, 314. Choiseul, Étienne François de Choiseul-Stainville, Duc de, Guide of French policy, ii. 200 ; undeserved failure of overtures of, 201 ; checkmated, takes Spain as ally, 203 ; adds demands of Spain to his own *mémoire*, 205 ; gains unexpected concessions, 274.

Churchill, Charles, ii. 298.

Cider tax, Dashwood's, unpopular, ii. 281.

Clandestine-Marriage Bill, framed by the Chancellor, i. 127 ; debate on, 127-36 ; passed in Commons, 134 ; repeal of, moved by Charles James Fox, ii. 305.

Cleves, ii. 273.

Closet, The, Newcastle jealous of, i. 73 ; Bedford arraigns Newcastle in, 118 ; silence reigns in, 119 ; disfavour of, toward Pitt, ii. 113 ; Fox's influence in, 115. *See also* George II.

Cobham, Richard Temple, Viscount, in Whig minority, i. 35 ; Pelham confers with, 50 ; denounces Pitt, 68.

'Cobham Cubs', The, not all provided for, i. 167.

Cockpit, The, i. 350 ; Fox presides at, 362 ; Tories congregated at, ii. 182-83.

Colloredo, Count Charles, i. 249 n 52.

Colonies, The American, Trouble of, with the French, i. 193-94 ; Granville's policy for, 194-95 ; project of union between, 195 n 103 ; two Irish regiments to be sent to Virginia, 196-97 ; to raise two regiments, 197-98 ; left to them-

selves, 257 ; subsidies diverted attention from, 342. *See also* America.

Commons, The House of, the centre of authority, i. 15-16 ; organized on bribery, 23 ; the Mathews-Lestock case in the, 53-56 ; votes address of thanks for reduction of expenses in King's personal guard, 72 ; a machine for plutoocratic Whiggism, 84 ; efforts of, directed to military measures, 96-98 ; vote on revision of sentence by a court martial, 98 ; action of, toward Murray in Trentham election case, 100-1 ; Anstruther-Erskine case in, 102-4 ; action in, on Bill for naturalization of foreign Protestants, 104-5 ; Fox promised the management of, 154 ; a Minister for, in the Closet, proposed, 187-89, 190 ; Fox's circular letter to members of, 348-50 ; Newcastle on management of, 349 n 147 ; Newcastle would make Fox impotent in, ii. 50 ; George Grenville, Leader of, 218 ; Sir John Cust elected Speaker of, 218-19 ; leader of, must have unhampered authority, 315-17 ; Fox's relations with, 317-20 ; bent to the royal will, 319 ; Fox's ideas on one management of, 323-24 ; Newcastle on Legge's plan for a Minister in, 342-44. *See also* Parliament.

Conciliabulum (inner clique of the Cabinet), The, a union of the American colonies projected by, i. 195 n 103 ; on the question of sending aid to the colonists, 196 ; on colonial business, 202 ; on difficulties with Austria, 250 ; on Hanover, 256 ; empowers Robinson to negotiate with Mirepoix, 262 ; elaborates England's American claims, 263 ; reverts to unconciliatory position, 266 ; on the regency question, 268 ; bellicose resolutions of, 269, 271 ; origin of the name, 347 ; Fox helpless in the, 412, 420 ; on the question of reinforcing Byng, 422 ; makes demands on Holland, ii. 14-15 ; meeting of, on Prince of Wales and Bute matter, 18-19 ; of Fox's enemies, 48 ; Gower admitted to the, 259 ; question of admitting Rutland to, 260 n 133 ; minutes of, 341-42, 348-49.

Con-Test, The, ii. 102.

Conway, General Henry Seymour, secretary to Devonshire, i. 314-15; introduces Militia Bill, ii. 70.

Cope, Sir John, i. 59.

Corruption, Insidious system of, 15, 16, 17; Walpole arch-organizer of, 23; widespread, 36; Pitt's resistance to a measure attacking, 66; made Commons a machine for Whiggism, 84; wholesale, ii. 269; Fox the King's special Minister for, in the Commons, 319. *See also Bribery.*

Council of Regency, Cumberland leading member of, i. 268; régime of, begins, 271; query, what to do with Hawke, 273-75; hostile orders to Hawke referred to the King, 276; Newcastle altered minute, 276; asks instructions from King, 277; sends Hawke to Torbay, to await instructions, 279; sends Hawke unlimited instructions, 283; ended by King's return, 333.

Court-Martial Bill in the Commons, ii. 58-64; fails in the Lords, 64; Fox's energy for the, 116.

Court Party, Differences in the, 225-26; necessity for harmony in, 228; ruse of, to reconcile Cumberland, 239; triumph for, 273. *See also 'King's Friends'.*

'Cousinhood', Troubles among the, i. 209-10; emissary to the, from Leicester House, 297; Fox's onslaught on the, 398.

Culloden, Battle of, i. 67; ii. 279.

Cumberland, William Augustus, Duke of, in command of army to invade France, i. 57-58; defeat of, at Fontenoy, 58; choice of, the greatest of blunders, 57 n 60; commander of forces sent against Charles Edward, 61; earns epithet of 'Butcher' after Culloden, 67; pensions for, 67; wants war to continue, 69; head of peace commission, 78; urges Fox to remain Secretary-at-War, 80; friends of, 87-89; welcomes Pelham at Windsor Lodge, 89; bitterness of, over the regency, 109, 114, 116; Pitt's covert insult to, and Fox's retort, 112; message of, to the King, 114; visits of Fox and others to, when injured, 121; on the sincerity of

Pelham's tears, 121; refuses to question His Majesty, 122; urges Fox to decline the Seals, 162; interests Pitt for invalid soldiers, 192-93; consulted on sending troops to America, 196, 199-200; policy of, wins, 203-4; opposed to continental 'plan', 255; not consulted in the matter, 256; bent on war, 260, 276; to Newcastle on the subject, 262-63; made leading member of Council of Regency, 268; active leader of War Party, 271; elevation of, discourages Mirepoix, 272; declares Hawke should have hostile orders and gains a point, 276; wants negotiations severed, 277-78; demands unlimited instructions for Hawke, 280; angry at being out-maneuvred by Newcastle, 281; victorious at final meeting, 282-83; visits the Princess and proposes taking nephews to see fleet, 285; popular suspicion of the 'Butcher', 286; hatred of Princess for, 286; on the Fox-Pitt rupture, 292; Pitt and his following agree to oppose, 297; inflames the public against subsidies, 299; threatens opposition to the Treaties, 305; not partisan but considers subsidies a mistake, 319-20; satisfied with Barrington, 340; power of, at an end, 342; foremost in the King's affection, 367; urges the policy of conquering Canada, 393; on General Shirley, 394; on the duty of relieving Minorca, 413; urges Minorca might yet be saved, 431; on the Newcastle promises to Fox, ii. 22; question of, having a hand in Fox's breach with the Ministry, 38; Fox cites his devotion to, 43; favours pardon for Byng, 65; pressing for dismissal of Pitt and Temple, 119; secures a reversion for Fox, 120; defeat of, at Hastenbeck, 157-58; makes Convention of Stade, 158; disavowed by the King, 158; recalled, 158-59; visited by Fox, 159; King refuses to listen to, 159; resigns and retires, 160; rumour of overtures by, to Leicester House, 168; interview of, with Fox, 210-11; wants Lady Caroline's peerage settled, 212; grievances of, against

nephew and Bute, 239; Pitt's remark on, 243; attached to Fox, 245; attitude of, towards Bute and the Peace, 246; Fox's interview with, 246–47, 252; would have Bute surrender Treasury to Fox, 252; abandons Fox, 252 n 114; gives account of interview to Newcastle, 255; interview of, with Pitt, 263; on Fox and Calcraft, 268; friendship of, for Fox, 307; desertion of Fox, 308; Fox long the mainstay of, 327, 331.

Cumberland, Richard, on Fox's 'solid good sense', ii. 333 n 70.

Cumberland Ministry, Devonshire ruins project of a, ii. 96.

Cumberland Party, The, i. 84–156; rise of the, 87–93; supports some measures of Anson, 96; in an election case, 98 and n 25; strikes first blow, 105; gaining popularity, 106; leadership of, devolves on Fox, 119; severed from the Administration by death of Pelham, 138; has cause for discontent, 168–69; no match for Hardwicke, 175; plotting against Newcastle, 189; alliance of, with the Pittites, 193; for vigorous action against the French in America, 196; has five votes in the Cabinet, 231; in the Rochford case, 233; in an election case, 240; espouses policy of action, 258; an ulcer, 259; dominates Cabinet, 262–63; triumph of, 267; responsibility of, for Boscawen's instructions, 269; becomes the War Party, 294; stronger than ever, 297; out of favour, 305; question of the policy of, 316–17; decides against Newcastle, 317, 322; a means to Fox, 322; could have turned the Newcastles out, 366; receives many appointments, 386; Fox remembers the, ii. 75–76; meeting of old chiefs of, 81. See also War Party.

Cust, Sir John, ii. 218–19.

Czaria (Elizabeth), Death of the, i. 437; ii. 225.

Darlington, Henry Vane, 1st Earl of, joint Paymaster with Dupplin, i. 380; dismissed, ii. 92.

Dashwood, Sir Francis (15th Baron Le Despencer), a second-rate man,

i. 87; Doddington wishes to bring in, 351; likely to come in with Doddington, 382; unable to accept office, 383; efforts of, for Byng, ii. 58; tries to postpone Minorca inquiry, 68; made Chancellor of Exchequer, 235; Fox proposes removal of, 280; cider tax of, unpopular, 281.

Deleval, Francis B., i. 210.

Denbigh, Basil Fielding, 6th Earl of, ii. 123.

Devonshire, William Cavendish, 3rd Duke of, possible for the Cumberland Party, i. 140; summoned to vote for Pelham's successor, 148; offered the Treasury, but declines, 149; affiliated to the Cumberlands, 169; hints Cabinet seat for Fox to Chancellor, 181–82; on Fox's promotion, 228; wants Cumberland sole regent, 268; declines to give advice to the Newcastle Ministry, 274; writes to Hartington on the Primate's removal, 315; attacks the Treaties, 317–18; the King on, 343; death of, 390.

Devonshire, William Cavendish, 4th Duke of (Marquis of Hartington), made Master of the Horse, i. 116; attached to Fox, 140; to negotiate with Fox, 154; denounces Newcastle's perfidy, 161; plotting a move, 174; made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 313–14; request of, for removal of the Primate, 314–15; allowed *carte blanche* by Newcastle, 318; Fox to, on the Treaties, 320–21; in favour of the Treaties, 343; pleased at Fox's promotion, 357; granted discretionary powers, 357–58; to explain the Russian Treaty to his father, 358; pleased at new acquisitions, 384–85; becomes Duke of Devonshire, 390; Fox confides in, ii. 5–6; asked by King to form an administration, 79; conference with Fox and Bedford, 80–81; reluctance of, 83; for First Lord in Granville's plan, 84; accepts the Treasury, 87; consents to Pitt's demands, 87; presents revised plan to Pitt, 90–91; warned by Fox against Newcastle, 94; composition of Cabinet of, 100; forced to trim between Fox and Pitt, 100; to remain in new

Ministry, 117, 118, 123, 368; urges Newcastle to secure Bute, 126; wants alliance of Newcastle and Pitt, 126, 128; insists on Pay Office for Fox, 128; explains Newcastle scheme to Fox, 131; content to be Lord Chamberlain, 143; helps Fox to re-election, 155; joins in recommending Bute for Secretary of State, 194; forced out of Cabinet by Bute, 205; favours Prussian subsidy, 229; resignation of, 233; declines King's summons to Peace *Conciliabulum*, 260; affront to, by, 260; receives assurances from Fox, 261; Newcastle's action at affront to, 262; spared at Fox's request, 276; friendship of, for Fox, 307; summoned to Cabinet Council, 336; on retirement of Bute precipitated by Fox, 381-82.

Digby, Charlotte, Lady, sister of Fox, i. 79 n 109.

Digby, Edward, 6th Baron, i. 79 n. 109

Digby, Henry, 7th Baron and 1st Earl, Fox solicits a post for, ii. 13; appointed Lord of Prince's Bedchamber, 33; death of, 161.

Digby, Henry ('Harry'), Fox acknowledges Newcastle's courtesies to, i. 79; question of a seat in Parliament for, 326.

Doddington, George Bubb, *Diary of*, valuable authority, i. 6; resigns as Treasurer of the Navy, 80; adds no strength to Tories, 87; refuses to give up hope, 106; to Pelham, on foreign subsidies, 124; urges the Princess to reconstruct Leicester House Party, 142; captures six seats, 176-77; fails to defeat Egmont, 177; discusses Russian Treaty with Fox, 320; Fox's efforts to secure, 351; more rabid than Pitt on the subsidy question, 352-53; doesn't believe Fox understands the Treaties, 353; promises to self and friends, 353-54; tempted to be Treasurer of the Navy, 382; on the political situation, ii. 82; dismissed, 92; helps Fox make up list for Cabinet, 117; on the list, 118; made 1st Baron Melecombe, 196; enters Cabinet, 236; death of, 240.

Dorset, Duchess of, i. 189.

Dorset, Lionel Cranfield Sackville, 1st Duke of, Troubles of, in Ireland, i. 138; failure of, to allay discontent, 313; for Treasury in Walpole's plan, ii. 138; pensioned, 145; asked to use his influence with the Beauclerk family, 155.

Dunkirk, ii. 274.

Dunwich, Borough of, ii. 216.

Dupplin (8th Earl of Kinnoul), Lord, Thomas Hay, mentioned for the Treasury, i. 146; special agent for corruption, 167; Newcastle's choice for Legge's place, 346; choice of, opposed by Hardwicke, 347; shares Pay Office with Darlington, 380; pressed to accept the Exchequer, ii. 123; declines order from King, 124; resigns position to Fox, 156; Newcastle offended at, 262.

Dutch troops, i. 59, 61.

Dyves, Penelope, Fox marries, i. 38.

Edgecumbe (1st Earl of Mount-Edgecumbe), George, Small fleet of, at Minorca, i. 414-15.

Egmont, John Perceval, 2nd Earl of, Leader of the Tories, i. 86-87; on revision of a sentence by a court martial, 97; on Trentham election case, 99-100; motion of, in Anstruther-Erskine case, 102; refuses to give up hope of Tory success, 106; excluded by the Newcastles, 155 n 134; fight of, for re-election, 175-77; named Comptroller of the Household, with seat in Privy Council, 230; attacks the Mutiny Bill, 238; lashed by Townshend, 238; influence at Leicester House, 300; Newcastle on provision for, 301; interview of, with Newcastle, 311-12; refuses to act without Pitt, 312; according to Carteret would attack the subsidies, 322; intrigues of, 327; action of, reflects the Princess's feelings, 344; reconciled with Lee, 353; votes for the Ministers, 370; favours Treaties but declines office, 377; out of favour at Leicester House, ii. 18; resigns, 26; refuses to serve Newcastle, 29, 44, 366; on Fox's list, 118; prefers a peerage, 120.

Egremont, Charles Wyndham, 2nd

- Earl, designated for the Seals, ii. 122; refuses, 123; for Secretary of State, 137; receives the Seals, 218; friction with Bute, 259; Fox's objection to, 280.
- Elections, Parliamentary, i. 175-77, ii. 216; Newcastle excluded from part in, 183.
- Elector of Hanover, *see* George I.
- Elector Palatine, i. 94.
- Electorate, *see* Hanover.
- Elliot, Gilbert, ii. 230.
- Ellis, Welbore, Motion of, for seamen, i. 373; made Secretary-at-War, ii. 266.
- England, Dangerous ascendancy of, i. 13-14; misfortune and stigma of, 17; leadership of, among the Allies, 57; Fox's fears for, 59; endeavours to coerce her allies, 250; Rouillé impugns, before every Court in Europe, 284 n 156; French invasions of, planned, 403; crisis for, approaching, 409; talk of invasion of, ceases, 432; report of intended French descent on, from Dunkirk, 433; saved by French policy, 438; cedes Havana to Spain, ii. 273; other concessions of, to France, 273.
- Enseñada, Zenon Silva, Marquis de, i. 407.
- Époques*, Dates for cessation of hostilities, ii. 198.
- Erskine, Sir Harry, acquitted of charges brought by Anstruther, i. 102; brings counter charges, 102-3; Pitt condemns dismissal of, 400.
- Falkirk, Battle of, i. 62.
- First Lord of the Treasury, *see* Newcastle, Thomas Pelham-Holles, 1st Duke of.
- Fitzmaurice, Lord, *see* Lansdowne, William Petty, 1st Marquis of, Earl of Shelburne.
- Florida, ii. 255.
- Fontenoy, Battle of, i. 58.
- Forbes, Admiral John, ii. 57.
- Fort Oswego, Fall of, ii. 30.
- Fowke, General Thomas, Governor of Gibraltar, Instructions to, i. 418; to re-enforce Byng, 418; gives Byng no aid, 427; additional orders to, 427-28; removed for disobedience, 430; Fox appeals to Newcastle for aid for, ii. 157.
- Fox, Charles James, Bequest to, from father, ii. 294; debts of, 295; an inveterate gambler, 302; father's pride in, 304-5; moves repeal of Hardwicke Marriage Act, 305; resigns seat in Admiralty, 306; given place at Treasury Board, 306 n 36; legacies to, from father, 332.
- Fox, Henry, *see* Special Index preceding General Index.
- Fox, Lady Georgiana Caroline (Baroness Holland), marries Henry Fox, 47; anger of parents with, 47-48; forgiven, 49; makes amends, 117; suggestion regarding Byng, ii. 65; anxiety for son, 115; peerage asked for, ii. 120, 183, 210; indignant at King, 209; made Baroness Holland and Foxley, 224; persuades Fox to refuse Treasury, 284; glad husband has left politics, 291; Fox's love for, 301.
- Fox, Sir Stephen, i. 28-31; loyalty of, to Charles II, rewarded, 28; political creed and character of, 28-29; declines a peerage, 29 n 4; amasses wealth as Paymaster, 30; second marriage and children of, 30-31; death of, 31.
- Fox (1st Lord Ilchester), Stephen, intimate with Lord Henry, i. 33; declines bribe of a peerage, 35 n 20; receives barony of Ilchester, 37-38; raised to earldom, ii. 13; to Devonshire on behalf of brother, 143-44.
- Fox, Stephen, 3rd, ii. 295, 302, 303-4.
- 'Fox-Waldegrave Ministry,' ii. 142.
- France, Dangerous ascendancy of, i. 13; humbled by Chatham, 15; naval aggression against, 16; corrupt government of, 17; Carteret's real enemy, 21; adjustment of difficulties with, in America, 242; irresolution and weakness of government of, 259; her navy weak, 259; desires peace at any cost, 260, 269; Newcastle and the difficulties with, 296; strained relations of, with England, 391; disturbing news from, 395-96; peace-overture of, 396, 407; overture of, rejected, 396-97; reported activities of, 420-3; indignant at Prussian Treaty, 403; pressure on Spain, 406-7; refuses mediation of Spain and Frederick II, 407-8; war declared against,

431; clever feint of, 432; enticed into a ruinous alliance with Austria, 436; diffuses her strength, 438; squadrons of, vanquished, ii. 150-51; desirous of peace, 174; proposes an international congress for peace, 197-98; negotiations of, with England, 198; Pitt objects to the *époques* proposed by, 198; *époques* of, rejected, 199 n 135; may accept aid of Spain, 200; allied with Spain, 203; accepts overtures for peace, 240; Bedford, envoy to, 214; concessions of, 273; wins the fishery question, 273. *See also French.*
 Franco-Austrian *entente*, announced by Keene, i. 408; completed, 409; as a topic of discussion, 432. *See also Versailles, Treaty of.*
 Franco-Prussian alliance, i. 409.
 Franco-Spanish fleet, i. 53.
 Franco-Spanish *rapprochement*, ii. 205.
 Frederick II (the Great), of Prussia, keeps Europe in a turmoil, i. 52; hatred of his uncle, George II, 246-47; claims mercantile damages from England, 247; defensive measures against, 342; dares not break with France, 342-43; reaches an understanding with England, 389-90; mediation of, with France, a failure, 406; begins Seven Years' War, 438; England's only prop, ii. 30; favours peace, 173; Pitt wants peace with, 175; unwilling that war should end, 224; reply to Bute's letter, 227; makes treaty with Russia, 227; accuses Bute of intriguing in Russia, 228; subsidy to, withheld, 233; Russia in alliance with, 234. *See also Prussia.*
 Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales, and the factious Whigs, i. 35; brings quarrel over allowance into Parliament, 37; drinks Fox's health, 61; death of, 105-6.
 French, The, Abortive attempt of, to invade England, i. 53; plan to expel, from their settlements on the St. Lawrence, abandoned, 69-70; overtures for peace from, 77; in America, 193-94; success of, in India, 259; persists in respecting the peace, 284; charged with being

the aggressors, 396-97; prepare for hostilities, 397; invasions by, threatened, 402-3; expedition of, against Minorca, 414, 418.

French fleet sails from Brest, i. 271. French Ministers, tricked by Frederick II, i. 390.

Furnese, Henry ('Harry'), gained over, i. 382, 383.

Galitzin, Prince, Russian ambassador, ii. 197.

George I, 21-22.

George II, Installation of, i. 14; Pitt incurs the hatred of, 45; opposes lords' plan of raising troops, 60; treats his ministers with indifference, 62; refuses to appoint Pitt Secretary-at-War, 63; calls on Bath and Granville to form a new administration, 63; obliged to restore the Pelham Ministry, and give Pitt an appointment, 65-66; mortified at Pitt's promotion to Pay Office and Privy Council, 68; pleased at Fox's letter on the peace, 79; urges Fox to remain Secretary-at-War, 80; urged to dismiss Bedford, 92; on Pitt's conduct in Anstruther case, 103; exasperated at demand for Bedford's removal, 107; provisions to be made against demise of, 108; wishes the Regency secured to his son, 108; compromises on the Princess as Regent, 108-9; talks with Fox on the Regency, 114-15; affection of, for Fox, 121; remark of, about Cumberland, 121; Fox never gains influence over, 121; refuses to receive Williams, 122; and the Fox-Hardwicke quarrel, 136-37; decision of, on Pelham's successor, 154; pleased at the election, 178; equivocal conduct, 182; talks much of Fox, 188; suspends Fox's orders, 201-2; summons Fox, 215-16; message to Fox by Waldegrave, 222; displeased, 225; questions Hardwicke about removal of Pitt, 226-27; tells Newcastle he is, as it were, First Minister, 231; crushing rebuke of, to Newcastle, 232; repeats same to Hardwicke, 234; overrules his Ministers, 236; warning to Hardwicke and Newcastle, 237; dual

position of, 246; refuses to hold an interview with Frederick the Great, 247; determines to go to Hanover in person, 251; leaves for Hanover, 254; to make subsidiary treaties only as Elector, 256; speech of, to Parliament, 266; mystified as to disposition to be made of Hawke, 275; willing to promote Egmont and Pitt, 304; furious at cost of Russian subsidy, 316; returns from Hanover, 333; assures Newcastle regarding Fox, 338-39; deplores Devonshire's position, 343; on anger of the Princess, 345; tells Newcastle he lacks spirit, 345; to Fox, 347; uses scurrilous terms about Pitt, 347; on Fox's letter to members, 350; objects to Hume Campbell, 359; consents to his promotion, 382; measures of, supported by Fox and Murray, 410; consents to give Murray a barony, ii. 9; and Ilchester an earldom, 13; Fox interviews, 13; calls Fox 'black', 14; sides with Holderness in Closet for Yorke, 15; rebukes Fox, 16; intentions of, towards the Prince of Wales, 16; opposed to granting Prince's requests, 17; suspects Bute of alliance with Pitt, 17; opposed to Pitt, 23; frames an ultimatum, 25; convinced by Fox, capitulates, 26; objects to Pitt, would talk to Fox, 40; Granville presents Fox's paper to, 41; condemns Fox for ingratitude, 41-42; appeals to Fox's honour in interview, 43; Newcastle's influence with, 53; criticizes Pitt's composition of the royal speech, 54; to Pitt, on pardon for Byng, 59-60; asks Fox to see Pitt, 75; offers office to Fox, 76; sends key to Bute, 78; answers Fox's pleasantry, 78; rails against Pitt to Bedford, 83; accepts Granville's plan for cabinet, 85; furious at Pitt's demands, 85, 88; indignant at Fox's asking peerages for wife and son, 95; courtesy to, in the matter of thank clause in Address, 105-6, 112; tired of his Ministers, 113; partiality for Fox, 114, 133, 142; offers Newcastle any terms, 115; disgusted with Newcastle's wavering, 117; summons Fox to compose a Ministry, 117; approved

Fox's list, 118; grants Fox a reversion, 120; persistent for Fox in Pay Office, 131, 133, 142; vetoes Newcastle's arrangement, 134; offers Waldegrave the Treasury, 134; Fox's interview with, 136; orders another meeting, 137; convinced of failure, 141; gives Mansfield powers to negotiate with Leicester House and the Newcastles, 142; entrusts pacification to Hardwicke, 144; relieved at end of *interministerium*, 145; favour of, won and held by Fox, 146; wrath of, at Cumberland for his defeat, 158-59; regret of, for hasty action, 160; on good terms with Pitt, 167; death of, 176. *See also Closet.*

George, Prince of Wales (aftw. George III), as a boy, i. 108; guardianship of, 109; the King plans marriage of, with a princess of Brunswick, 284; aversion of, to Cumberland, 305; allowance for, from George II, on attaining majority, ii. 16; asks to remain with mother and for Earl of Bute as his Groom of the Stole, 16; the King opposes, 17; discussion over matter in *Conciliabulum*, 18-19; wins his point, 26; levee of, at Saville House, 76; as arbitrator, 133; Fox's advice about, 331.

George III, Accession of, ii. 176; Waldegrave on, 176-77; offers the Seals to Bute, 177; reaction under, 178-80; Pitt on speech of, 182; Tories at Cockpit to hear speech of, 182-83; praise for Fox, 183; love for Lady Sarah Lennox, 187-89; offers her marriage, 188; pensions Pitt, 207; Pitt's conduct an affront to, 207; 'barely civil' to Newcastle when resigning, 231, 232; to Fox on his call to the Cabinet, 251; ingratitude of, 251-52; determines to force the Peace, 257; strikes Devonshire's name from Council list, 260; to ratify the Preliminaries under seal, 264; stigmas upon, 265; Fox to, on keeping the Pay Office, 285, 288; a controversy unworthy of, 289; on dismissal of Fox, 295-96; seeks Fox's advice, 297; refuses Fox an earldom, 297; Fox on his 'disgrace with the King', 297 n 19;

- responsibility of, for profligate type of government, 322.
- Gibraltar, France tempts Spain with, i. 407; Fox's scheme of exchanging with Spain, for Port Mahon, 433-34; Pitt's scheme relative to, ii. 112 n 137.
- Glover, Richard, ii. 77.
- Goree, ii. 273.
- Gower, Granville Leveson-Gower, 2nd Earl (Lord Trentham), elected for Westminster, i. 98; attacked, 99; quits the Admiralty, 119; of the Cumberland Party, 140; given the Privy Seal, 384; for Secretary of State, ii. 137; present at third meeting, 139; Master of the Horse, 145; betrays Fox's confidences to Newcastle, 145; admitted to *Conciliabulum*, 259.
- Gower, John Leveson-Gower, 1st Earl, Pelham confers with, i. 50; resumes the Privy Seal, 50; in scheme for raising regiments, 60; vexed at Bedford's spirit, 119; of the Cumberland Party, 140; effort to induce resignation of, 168-69; death of, 231.
- Grafton, Charles Fitzroy, 2nd Duke of, in Fox's circle, i. 140.
- Grafton, Augustus Henry Fitzroy, 3rd Duke of, removed from lieutenancy, ii. 276, 380.
- Grafton Ministry, Fox's interest in, ii. 297, 299 n 22.
- Granby, John Manners, Marquis of, as a mediator in negotiations, i. 105; Fox to, on the Peace, ii. 268-69.
- Granville, John Carteret, 2nd Earl, Diplomatic talents of, i. 19; diplomatic boldness and political weakness of, 20; yields up the Seals, 21; foreign policy of, 21-22; real cause of downfall of, 22-23; opposition to, 46; on Fox's marriage, 48; succeeded by Harrington, 50; influence of, with the King suspected, 62; censures dispatching of troops, 62; attempts with Bath to form a new administration, 63-64; Seals conferred upon, 64; last effort of, a failure, 65; seeks reconciliation with Newcastle, 120; Fox on the dishonesty of, 120; appointed President of the Council, 120; colonial policy of, 194-95; triumphs over Newcastle, 203-4; in a meeting on question of getting Fox's support, 222; urges the King's return, 257; as advocate of bold policy, 261; faith of Mirepoix in, 261; prevents compromise, 265; alleged ascendancy of, 267; dupes Mirepoix, 267; perhaps instigator of Boscowen's hostile instructions, 269; deceives Mirepoix, 270; favours leaving trade unharmed, 280; intoxicated at a meeting, taunts Newcastle, 283; Fox's intimacy with, as a reason for the Fox-Pitt rupture, 292; tells Newcastle that countless men oppose subsidies, 319; that subsidies would be attacked on the first day, by Pitt, Legge and others, 322; that Fox wishes to be Newcastle's Lieutenant, 323; that Fox has not ratified the Hessian Treaty, 323; that Robinson should be removed to the Lords, 324; plain talk of, to Newcastle, 325; intimate with Fox, 333; mediator to entrap Fox, 336; sarcasm to Newcastle, 336; idol of George II, 338; dropped as mediator, 339; suggests Legge's removal, 345; author of term *Conciliabulum*, 347; assists in canvassing, 361; associated with Fox in Pitt's metaphor, 370; growls at appointments, 386; message from Fox to, through Murray, 426; on Prince of Wales and Earl Bute matter, ii. 19; calls Fox and Newcastle cowards, 28 n 63; to Fox on latter's determination to resign, 36; reply to Newcastle's offer of his place, 37; finds Fox inflexible, 39; presents Fox's 'paper', 41; may determine to enforce Fox's terms in the Closet, 44; again refuses Newcastle's place, 49; presents a cabinet list to the King, 84-85; gains its acceptance, 85; taunts Newcastle, 116 n 151; Fox counts on, for new Ministry, 118; at second meeting, 137; at third and sanguine, 139; on the Peace of Paris, 274; relations of, with Fox, 308.
- Gray, Thomas, ii. 298.
- Great Britain, disturbs balance of power of the world, i. 14.
- Grenville, George, in the following of Frederick, Prince of Wales, i. 35; resolutions of, in Mathews-Lestock case, 55-56; a Pittite, 142; mentioned for the Treasury, 146;

favoured by Pitt for the Treasury, 148; Treasurer of the Navy, 167; speaks well, 368; dismissed from office, 371; chronic dissatisfaction of, 398; re-appointed Treasurer of the Navy, ii. 92; resigns, 121; re-appointed, 212; Bute begs, not to name Fox to the King, 213; designated to manage the Commons, 217; declines the Seals and accepts the Admiralty, 217-18; jealous of Fox, 218; made Secretary of State, 236; on retention of Havana, Guadeloupe, and St. Lucia, 242; estranged from Bute, 248, 259; made First Lord of Admiralty, 254; Fox's detestation of, 280; recommended by Fox for Treasury, 284.

Grenville, James ('Jemmy'), interviews Newcastle on behalf of Pitt, i. 298; resigns from Treasury, 380.

Grenville, Richard (2nd Earl Temple), in the following of Frederick, Prince of Wales, i. 35; a Pittite, 142; open opposition of, 183; negotiates with Bedford for the prospective opposition, 355; assures Doddington of satisfaction with Fox, 299; taunts Hardwicke in the Lords, 388 n 57; signs Byng verdict, ii. 57; insolence of, to the King, 66-67; Pitt demands Admiralty for, 84; to head the Admiralty, 92, 367; attacks clause of thanks in Address, 105-6; the King determines to get rid of, 114, 117; dismissed, 121; becomes Lord Privy Seal, 145; insists on a vacant garter, 167; offered the Lieutenancy, 193; not allowed to accept by Pitt, 194; Pitt's 'shadow', resigns, 207.

Guadeloupe, ii. 273.

Gueldres, ii. 273.

Habeas Corpus Act, ii. 167.

Halifax, George Montagu-Dunk, 2nd Earl of, in scheme for raising regiments, i. 60; against the Ministry, 297; Fox writes Newcastle to enlist, 351; promised places for two friends, 352; to be conciliated, 382; refuses Newcastle's place, ii. 49; for the Admiralty in projected ministry, 117, 118; calls scheme 'wildest imaginable', 119; withdraws acceptance, 120; refuses the Seals, 136;

quarrel with Newcastle, 161-62; gets seat in Cabinet, 162; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 196; made First Lord of Admiralty, 237; would not give up Havana, 242; Secretary of State, 254; makes overtures to Newcastle, 258; Fox's enmity to, 280; present at *Conciliabulum* on colonial union, 241-42.

Hamilton, Lady Hamilton, i. 35.

Hamilton, William Gerard, Speech of, i. 368; Fox wants place for, ii. 100.

Hanover, Electorate of, British interests sacrificed to, i. 20; security of the, 21-22; Pitt's slighting remarks upon, 45; defence of, 242; secured by buffer states, 254; help for, if attacked, 256; Pitt on loss of, 308; Devonshire declares Hanover must take care of itself, 318; French propose attack on, 396; Pitt professes friendship for, ii. 46, 54; money for, asked and voted, 55; given up to England, 273.

Hanoverian mercenaries, i. 42, 410-11.

Hanoverian soldier, Case of the, ii. 84.

Hardwicke, Philip Yorke, 1st Baron and Earl of, resigned as Lord Chancellor, i. 64; returns to office, 65; sides with Newcastle against peace, 71; on Lord Egmont, 85 n 1; to draft Regency Bill, 109; frames Clandestine Marriage Bill, 127; personal attacks upon, by Townshend and Fox, 128-29; defended by son Charles, 129; bitter reply to Fox, 135-36; never forgives Fox, 137; opposed to Fox as Pelham's successor, 149; intrigues of, 149-54; reconciliation with Fox, 156; on altercation with Lady Gower, 168; fears plots, 173-75; on Legge's idea of 'single leadership', 187-88; saves Pitt from the King at Fox's expense, 226-27; interview with King on Newcastle's behalf fails, 234-35; fixes responsibility for the trouble, 236; on what to do with Hawke, 274-75, 277-8; on Pitt's message through J. Grenville, 298-99; arranges interview of Charles Yorke with Pitt, 301; Pitt's interview with,

307-9; defends the subsidies, 308-9; plans to have Pitt meet Newcastle, 309; on Pitt's intentions, 309; replies to Newcastle's queries, 310; advises Newcastle of a cabal in the Commons, 322; on Granville's interview with Newcastle, 325; sneers at Fox, 325 n 83; on Pitt's attitude, 332; advises enlisting Fox's services, as Newcastle's best course, 332; on the wrath of the Princess, 344-45; favours Egmont for Legge's place, 346-47; afraid of Fox's letter, 349; interviews Bedford, 358-59; working on the Address, 362; furious at Hume Campbell, 381; engaged in political work, 386; taunted by Temple, 388 n 57; Fox sneers at, ii. 6-7; warns Newcastle, 12; on Prince of Wales and Earl Bute matter, 18-19; on coalition of Pitt and Fox to King, 23; advises Newcastle, 27, 35; opinion of Fox's declaration against the Ministry, 38; on Fox's haste, 38; fears Fox will claim merit of naming Pitt, 44; interviews Pitt at Lord Royston's, 44-45; resigns, 50, 95; on Court-martial Bill, 64; advice respecting Byng, 66; remark on Fox's determination to resign, 72; warns Pitt against 'inquiries and censures', 103; Newcastle governed by, 118; engaged in politics, 127-29; gains place for Anson, 129-30; audiences with King for pacification, 144; on Pitt's '*fanfaronade*', 174 n 67; joins in recommending Bute for Secretary of State, 194; against monopolizing the fisheries, 204; Bute refuses Privy Seal to, 222; favours Prussian subsidy, 229; retires from the Cabinet, 233; on Devonshire's removal, 261; on attacking the Preliminaries, 265. Harrington, William Stanhope, 1st Earl, Seals given to, i. 50; resigns, 63 n 71, 64; refuses to join the Opposition, 64; slighted by colleague, 69; forced to retire, 71; appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 72.

Harris, James, ii. 271.

Hartington, Marquis of, *see* Devonshire, W. Cavendish, 4th Duke of.

Hastenbeck, Battle of, ii. 112 n 137, 157-58.

Havana, ii. 241-42, 255.

Hawke, Admiral Edward Hawke, 1st Baron, ordered to get a squadron in readiness, i. 271; question of what to do with, 273-81; fleet of, 416; sent to relieve Byng, 430.

Hay, Sir George (Dr.), ii. 98.

Heir-apparent, *see* George, Prince of Wales (afterwards George III).

Henley, Sir Robert, favours Clandestine Marriage Bill, i. 130; becomes Attorney-General, ii. 95.

Her Royal Highness, *see* Augusta, Princess of Wales.

Hervey, John Hervey, 1st Baron, Fox's Latin correspondence with, i. 32 n 11; influential, 33; Fox serves as second for, in a duel, 34 n 17; recommends Stephen Fox, junior, to Walpole, 35 n 20; gets Fox appointed Surveyor-General of Works, 37.

Hesse, subsidized, i. 247; treaty with, 254; signed, 296, 303; Fox on treaty, 306; did not sign order for ratification of, 323; vote on the treaty with, i. 389.

Hessian mercenaries, summoned, i. 61, 404, 410; secured by treaty, 254; Pitt against, ii. 357.

Highland regiments, ii. 113, 149-50.

Hillsborough, Wills Hill, Earl of, on number of Fox's friends, i. 125; on Townshend's voice, 131; member of the Cumberland Party, 140; removed as Comptroller of the Household, 230; secured as a speaker for the treaties, 359; to move the Address, 361; won over, 383.

Hindon, Borough of, i. 37.

His Royal Highness, *see* Cumberland, William Augustus, Duke of.

Holburne, Admiral Francis, i. 271 n 114.

Holderness, Robert D'Arcy, 4th Earl of, succeeds Bedford as Secretary of State, i. 121; transferred to the northern dept., 154 n 132; subservient to Newcastle, 158; to Hanover with King, 254; subsidy plan of, submitted, 255; reply to Newcastle's appeals to the King, 303; a cipher in office, 364; instructions of, to Keith, 408; on Pitt's unreasonableness, ii. 82-83; Pitt's demand of place for, 84, 90, 92; offers to

- resign, 87; in communication with Newcastle, 99–100; on Devonshire's difficulties, 100; urged by Newcastle to resign, 135; resigns, 137; under the influence of Bute, 163–64; attached to Leicester House, offends Newcastle, 164 n 41; as Bute's daily informant, 169; only Minister in favour at Court, 180; retired and pensioned, 195.
- Holland, Henry Fox, 1st Baron, *see* Fox, Henry.
- Holland, Lady, *see* Fox, Lady Caroline.
- Holland, Destruction of, threatened, i. 71; loth to contribute share in subsidies, 248; impending rupture with, over the Barrier question, 249; obdurate as ever, 296; refuses requisitions, 405; demand on, to execute her commercial treaty, ii. 14; vessels of, seized, 15; Yorke holds back demand on, to declare war on France, 15; adhesion to maritime league against England, 15.
- Hopes, Christian, second wife of Sir Stephen Fox, i. 30 n 8.
- Hubertsburg, Treaty of, signed, ii. 282.
- Ilchester, Lord, *see* Fox, Stephen, junior.
- Ireland, Dissensions in, i. 138–39; invasion of, threatened by France, 402, 403; Bedford's rule in, 172–73.
- Irish Parliament, Question of a new, ii. 184–86.
- Irish regiments, to serve in America, i. 197; question of augmenting, 202.
- Irish troops, Question of utilizing, i. 405–6.
- Jacobite Tories, opposed to raising troops, i. 60.
- Jacobitism, Fox's distaste for, i. 34 n 19; terrors of, 57 n 60.
- Johnson, Major-General Sir William, i. 393–94.
- 'Junius', ii. 298.
- Kaunitz, Wenzel Anton Dominik, Prince, made Chancellor of the Empire, i. 245; predicts war, 272; power of, 408 n 110; successful policy of, 409.
- Keene, Sir Benjamin, Ambassador at Madrid, i. 392; on friendship of Spain, 406–8; on efforts of Austria in Spain, 419; death of, ii. 206 n 148.
- Keith, Robert, English ambassador at Vienna, i. 246; letter from, 249; attempt to conciliate Empress, 408; audience refused, 408 n 110.
- Keppel, Augustus Keppel, Viscount, ii. 59, 61, 62–63.
- Kildare, James Fitzgerald, Earl and Marquis of, seeks aid for party in Ireland, i. 138; attempts of, to secure an audience, 139; disclaims any party interest, 139; consoled by the Ministers, 140; unmanageable, 313–14; on removal of the Primate, 315; Fox's interest in, ii. 172; Bedford obliged to give up, 172–73; contest of, with the Lords Justices, 184–85; Bedford with, sustained by Cabinet and Privy Council, 185; created a marquis, 186.
- King, The, *see* George II, George III. 'King Charles's martyrdom' holiday, Fox moves to sit on, i. 238–39. 'King's Friends', The, led by Bute, ii. 178; deemed unconquerable, 279. *See also* Court Party.
- Kingsgate, ii. 238, 240, 294, 295.
- Kinnoul, Thomas Hay, 8th Earl, *see* Dupplin, Lord.
- Klosterseven, *see* Stade.
- Knowles, Sir Charles, i. 397.
- Knyphausen, Baron von, Prussian ambassador, Pitt to, on peace with Prussia, ii. 175.
- La Gallissonnière, Rolland Michel Bassin, Marquis de, Admiral in command of French fleet at Minorca, i. 414.
- Lansdowne, William Petty, 1st Marquis of (Lord Fitzmaurice, Earl of Shelburne), procures interview with Bute for Fox, ii. 184; a military preferment for, 187; assisting Fox *in re* peerage for Lady Caroline, 210–12; urged by Fox to take office, 236; offers Seals to Fox, 249; on the Peace vote, 271; assumption of, that

- Fox would give up Pay Office, 285, 287; on Fox's wealth, 293.
- Lee (Dr.), Sir George, a second-rate man, i. 87; acknowledges failure, 106; Leicester House candidate for Pelham's place, 146; moves address in the Commons, 208; willing to accept the Exchequer, 229, 301, 304; out against the Treaties, 311, 322; defection of, 327; cannot 'act with Fox', 344; to Campbell on Fox's letter, 350; reconciled to Egmont, 353; out of favour at Leicester House, ii. 18; accepts Exchequer, 122; for same in Newcastle scheme, 129; refuses position, 136; resigns from Leicester House, 161.
- Leeds, Thomas Osborne, 4th Duke of, Cofferer, ii. 93; saved from dismissal, 94; will resign and enter opposition, 138.
- Legge, Henry Bilson, appointed Treasurer of the Navy, i. 80; informs Bedford of Sandwich's dismissal, 118; mentioned for the Treasury, 146; made Chancellor of the Exchequer, 154; would be Newcastle's tool, 157; snubbed by Newcastle, 166; message to Hardwicke on Fox, 174; colloquy with Newcastle, 179–80; offends Newcastle, 180–1; proposes 'single leadership' with a Cabinet seat, 187; efforts for Sandwich, 189; part in Newcastle's 'system', 191; still disturbing Newcastle, 205–6; for Fox as Secretary of State, 207; speech of, pleases Newcastle and the King, 208; no intention of giving, 229; something to be found for, 230; refuses to sign warrant for Hessian levy-money, 303–4, 306; notoriety of, 304; received by Leicester House, 304–5; likely to attack the subsidies, 322; 'child of the Whigs,' 330 n 95; removal of, demanded, 345; protected by Newcastle's fear, 346; asked by Fox to preside at the Cockpit, 350; dismissed from office, 371; advice to the Prince of Wales, ii. 16; Devonshire opposed to nomination of, 81; consents to remain in same office, 82; for peerage in Granville's plan, 85; given seals of the Exchequer, 88; attempt to get Fox's borough, 98–99; resigns, 121; restored to office, 144; intrigue with Bute, 163; peerage for wife of, 163; hated by Pittites, supported by Leicester House, 166; dismissed, 196; on Treaty of Paris, 271.
- Leicester House, Tories link their fate with, i. 86; importance of, 87; importance to, of death of Prince of Wales, 105–6; favoured by the Pelhams, 108; the Princess urged to reconstruct the Party of, 142; in campaign for Pelham's place, 146; against Fox, 147; wrath of, 284–85, 344; factious conduct of, 297; welcomes Legge, 304–5; designs of, 311–12; not committed by Egmont, 316; influence of attitude of, 353; recruiting for, 354; shafts of, blunted, 362; party of, votes with the Opposition, 370; less formidable, 376–77; power of Bute at, ii. 16–17, 18; solicits Newcastle, 18; victory for, 26; pacification of, desirable, 27–28; pleased with the King's message, 32; Fox to Bedford on relations with, 97–98; Walpole on Fox's relations with, 124 n 177; the King's surrender to, 142; new era at, 161; worries the ministers, 162; to the front, 175–76; hated by Cumberland, 246.
- Lennox, Georgiana Caroline, *see* Fox, Lady Georgiana Caroline.
- Lennox, Lady Sarah, love-affair of George III with, ii. 187–89; asked to be bridesmaid at King's wedding, 209–10; dissuades fiancé from a motion, 227; on health of Fox, 301–2.
- Lestock, Vice-Admiral Richard, quarrel of, with Admiral Mathews, i. 53; case before the Commons, 53–56; acquitted, 56; gratitude of, to Fox, 57.
- Lincoln (2nd Duke of Newcastle), Henry Fiennes Pelham-Clinton, Lord, resignation of, ii. 262.
- Lincoln, Lord, *see* Newcastle, Henry Fiennes Pelham-Clinton (2nd Duke of).
- Logwood, Concession on, ii. 241–42.
- Lord President, *see* Granville, John Carteret, 2nd Earl.
- Louis XV, Indolence and irresolution of France under, i. 259; hopeless incapacity of the Government of, 436.
- Louisburg, ii. 11.
- Low Countries, *see* Netherlands, The.

Lyttelton, Sir George, in the Opposition, 19; in the following of Frederick, Prince of Wales, 35; favours Fox for the Seals, 75; fails of re-election to Parliament, 80; betrays secret of the Pittites, 142; mentioned for the Treasury, 146; Pitt's distrust of, 151 n 121; made Cofferer, 167; Newcastle's messenger to Bedford, 209-10; repudiated, 210; made Chancellor of the Exchequer, 371, 380; proposes tax on plate, 401; advice to Newcastle, ii. 49; resigns to accept peerage, 50; makes party capital of the Byng affair, 66; as an unauthorized mediator, ii. 258.

Lyttelton, Sir Richard, a Pittite, i. 142; as a mediator, 297.

Mackenzie, John Stuart, ii. 161.

Manila, ii. 273.

Mansfield, William Murray, 1st Earl and Baron of, *see* Murray, William.

Maria Theresa, Empress-Queen, subsidy to, renewed, i. 52; plan to make son of, King of Rome, 93-94, 245; refuses to give up territory, 94; anger of, 242; ignores the Barrier Treaty, 245; demands guarantee for her possessions, 250; fears Prussia, 250; refuses to send army to Flanders, 251; 'will have nothing to do with us,' 296; refuses audience to Keith, 408 n 110.

See also Austria.

Marie galante, ii. 273.

Maritime Powers, i. 243.

Marlborough, Charles Spencer, 3rd Duke of, loyalty to Fox, i. 48 n 44; enjoys Newcastle's humiliation, 119; of the Cumberland Party, 140; ambitious to succeed Dorset in Ireland, 189; Fox for, in election disputes, 208; given the Privy Seal, 231; of the War Party, 271; in the controversy over Hawke's instructions, 280-82; reliability of, as a supporter of the Administration, 383; made Master-General of the Ordnance, 384; urges Bedford to mediate between Fox and Pitt, ii. 75; has dinner and conference with Fox and Bedford, 80-81; helps Fox to re-election, 155; death of, 161; friendship for Fox, 307.

Marlborough, John Churchill, 1st Duke of, Victories of, i. 14.

Martin, Samuel, ii. 231.

Martinique, Pitt plans expedition against, ii. 199; given back to France, 273.

Mason, William, ii. 298.

Mathews, Admiral Thomas, friend of, with Vice-Admiral Lestock, i. 53; the case in the Commons, 53-56; Fox moves address to King for a court martial, 56; convicted by court martial, 57.

Melcombe, George Bubb Doddington, 1st Baron, *see* Doddington, George Bubb.

Michel, M., ambassador from Berlin, i. 389-91.

Militia Bill, of the Opposition favoured by Fox, i. 423; defeated by Newcastles in Upper House, 424; passed by Pitt-Devonshire Ministry, ii. 113; and the Highland regiments remedies for military inefficiency, 149-50.

Ministry (*Walpole*), Stephen Fox, a protégé of the, i. 33; (*Carteret*) Pitt's attack upon the, 43; Fox's defence of, 44; (*Pelham*) decisive victory for, 50-51; has problem of Charles Edward to face, 58; decides to continue the peers' regiments, 61; the King's indifference to his, 62-63; members of, resign, 64; demands Pitt as a colleague, 65; some changes in the, 67-68; fraternal quarrel in the, 70-71; value of Fox to the, 82, 137; another dispute in the, 93; Pitt and others of Prince's Court secede to the, 106; Fox not ready to incur enmity of the, 106; a factious party in the, 107; bearing of Fox's stand on the Regency Bill upon the, 113; Fox tries to impress, with his loyalty, 138; (*Newcastle*), organized, 166; labyrinth of intrigue for the, 179; divided and distracted, 194; Fox acquired by the, 222; peace in Parliament cure for maladies of the, 225; besieged by King for assistance for Hanover, 255-56; attitude of, difficult to define, 260; Cumberland and Fox dominating naval policy of the, 284; the Cumberlands at variance with magnates of the, 305; Pitt might save the, 327; sorely in need of vindication, 341; unanimity of, secured, 371; strength

of the, in Lower House, 376; understanding of the, with Frederick II, 389-90; reply to preliminary demands of France, 396; misfortunes of the, 401-2; a crisis for the, being reached, 409-10; saving Minorca forced upon the, 412; Fox defending, 424; receives news of fall of Minorca, 430; receives copy of Treaty of Versailles, 435; Fox to share stigma of disasters to, ii. 6-7; obstinate folly of, 15; perplexed over Prince of Wales's requests of the King, 16; Fox declares, should submit to Bute, 23-24; caricatured, 29; fails to concert a 'system', 29; writers on continent attacking the, 30; rift in the, gaping, 31; fall of, 50; condemned, 53; guilt of, protected by that of Byng, 65; defended by Fox in Minorca inquiry, 69-70; two crises in Newcastle Ministry surmounted by assistance of Fox, 72; in third, Fox causes overthrow, 72; (*Pitt-Devonshire*) launched, 95; harassed by *The Test*, 101; disgraced on first day of Parliament, 105; chance of inspiring confidence lost to the, 106; incurable weakness of the, 110, 112; estimate of, 113; the King tired of the, 113; partial wreck of, 121; (*Pitt-Newcastle*) Pitt's own ministry, 149; intrigues in the, 161-64; national debt increased by the, 164; Whigs almost unanimous for the, 170; changes in the, under new king, 180-81; unpopularity of, 211; (*Bute*) overtures of, to France for peace accepted, 240; negotiates with Fox through Shelburne, 249; power of, surrendered to Fox, 253; encouraged in its policy, 257; apparently harmonious, 259; outcry against the, 265; unpopularity of, 266; great triumph for, 273; troubles in Commons for the, 281; work of, accomplished, 291; the (*Grenville*) dismisses Fox, 295; (*Grafton*) Fox's interest in, 297; (*Chatham*) Lord Holland's advice to, 321. Minorca, to be surprised by French, i. 403; France tempts Spain with, 406-7; action for defence of, forced upon Ministry, 412-13; Byng sent to, 414, 417-18; cap-

tured, 430; might yet be saved, in Cumberland's opinion, 431; rage for loss of, ii. 5; Chesterfield on Fox's connexion with, 27; inquiry on, probable, 53; investigation into loss of, 67-70; given up to England, 273; Fox opposition to Ministry's policy toward, 329. *See also* Port Mahon.

Mirepoix, Gaston Charles François de Levis, Duc de, French ambassador, i. 260; given full powers to treat for peace, 261-62; offers surrender of Ohio country, 262, 264; hampered by superiors, 262, 265; compromise proposed by, fails, 266; duped by Granville, 267, 270; urges his own recall, 268; prophecies a general war, 272; recalled, 278; letters to, intercepted, 394; declaration on the Boscowen episode, 395; foundation for negotiation with, ii. 344-47.

Mitchell, Sir Andrew, Ambassador to Court of Berlin, i. 391.

Montagu, John Montagu, 2nd Duke of, at head of scheme for raising troops, i. 60; Fox inveighs against, 60.

Murray, Alexander, Tyrannical treatment of, i. 16; convicted of violence at election, 99-101; committed to Newgate, 100; Fox's persecution of, ii. 329.

Murray, William (1st Earl and Baron of Mansfield), Solicitor-General, i. 56; supports an amendment to Mutiny Bill, 97; charged with drinking health of the Pretender, 125, 380; supports Clandestine Marriage Bill, 130; refutes Fox's arguments, 134; candidate for Pelham's place, 145; withdraws, 151; Attorney-General, 167; a 'Tory head to a Whig body', 180; Newcastle on the attack on, 181-84; for vigorous action against the French in America, 196; lashed by Pitt, 212-13; intimate with Fox, 333; Fox urges Newcastle to enlist, 351; urges Newcastle to see Doddington, 352; assists Ministry, 359; speaks well, 368; forces Pitt to admission of lying, 376; praises Fox for defence of Ministry, 426; about to leave the Commons, ii. 8; demands the Chief-Justiceship and a peerage, 8;

receives both, 9; to influence Argyll, 23; blames Newcastle for treatment of Fox, 49; made Baron Mansfield and Chief Justice, 96; sent to Fox by Newcastle, 114; of Newcastle's advisory Cabinet, 116; urges Newcastle to join new Ministry, 118; to Ilchester on the Fox-Waldegrave scheme, 140-41; tells King of the failure, 141; seldom agrees with Pitt, 167; opposed to Prussian subsidy, 229; has no voice in the Cabinet, 238; no longer supporter of Newcastle, 264.

Mutiny Bill, discussed in Commons, i. 97-98; Egmont's attack on the, 238.

Navy Bill, Grenville's, ii. 170.

Navy, British, Condition of, i. 415-17; victories of, ii. 241.

Netherlands, The, or Low Countries, i. 58; ceded to House of Hapsburg, i. 243.

Newcastle, Henry Fiennes Pelham-Clinton, 2nd Duke of (Lord Lincoln), ii. 262.

Newcastle, Thomas Pelham-Holles, 1st Duke of, traitor to Walpole, 19; power of, 20; character of, 11, 24-26; hesitates to employ Pitt, 45; covets a share of his brother's power, 51-2; continues Granville's policy of subsidies, 52; resigns, 64; returns to office, 65; letter of, to Richmond, on Fox's appointment, 68; favours prolonging the war, 69; despotic spirit of, 69; against making peace, 71; jealous of Chesterfield, 72-73; suggests Bedford for the Seals, 77; commended by Fox, 78; a fatal foe to Whiggism, 85; jealous of Pelham's reception at Windsor Lodge, 89; estranged from Bedford and Sandwich, 90; quarrels with Sandwich and Cumberland, 90-91; pert letter of, to Princess Amelia, 91; jealous of Bedford, 91-92; seeks his removal, 92; diplomatic schemes, 93-94, 245; bullies Pelham, 94; begs in vain for removal of Bedford, 107; eulogizes Cumberland in opening regency question, 109; arraigned by Bedford and refused an audience by the King, 118; behaviour over

Cumberland's injury, 121; fears to offend Fox, 122-23; made First Commissioner of the Treasury, 154; promises to Fox, 154-55; distrustful of, and perfidy towards Fox, 159-62, 165-66; mystified by intrigues, 175; interest of, in the elections, 177; resentment against Legge, 180; on the Fox-Devonshire conspiracy, 183-84; aghast at Legge's idea of 'single leadership', 187; fears Fox's ambition, 188-89; political caution and jealousy, 190; plan of, for management of the Commons, 191-92; checks Fox's haste, 201-3; frustrated by the Cumberland Party, 203-4; taunted by Pitt, 204 n 133; gives dinner not inviting Fox, 206; puzzled at Pitt's conduct, 207; opposes Sandwich's candidates, 208; attacked in the Commons, 211; driven to contemplate some concession, 214-15; makes overtures to Fox, 216-19; yields to Fox's demands, 222; Fox acknowledges no obligation to, 229; crushed by King's rebuke, 232-33; lays blame on Fox, 233, 236; deliberately misrepresents a case, 236 n 29; concedes an election to the Cumblands, 240; refuses conditional votes of Tories, 241; power in the Cabinet in danger, 241; irritating communications of, to Austria, 246; subsidizing schemes, 247-48; fears arousing nation with subsidies, 256; urged by Mirepoix to remove Fox, 261; pawn of the War Party, 263, 272; intrigues of, in the interest of peace, 264-65; outmanœuvred, 268; deceives Mirepoix, 270; on Boscowen affair, 270 n 110; vacillating temper of, 272 n 118; in dilemma, 273; alters the Council minute, 276; on the question of Hawke's instructions, 280; outmanœuvres War Party, 281; inflexible to protests, 282; a political trimmer, 295-96; distrusted at Vienna and The Hague, 296; incapacity of, as leader, 297; keeps free from intrigues, 298; letters to Hanover on the situation, 300-1; overture to Pitt fails, 302; offended at Cumberland and Fox, 305; effort of, to secure Pitt through Hardwicke, 306-9; com-

plaints of, 306 n 37 ; queries of, to Hardwicke about Pitt interview, 310 ; interview of Egmont with, 311-12 ; part in the Primate of Ireland's case, 314-15 ; interview with Granville, 322-24 ; preparing for struggle with Pitt, 327-28 ; interview with Pitt, 328-31 ; consults Hardwicke as to proper policy, 331 ; has vain meetings with Pitt, 332 ; forced to make overtures to Fox, 333-34 ; offers to make way for Granville, 336 ; or to resign, but King refuses, 336 ; negotiations with Fox, 336-40 ; anxious about Fox's relations with King, 337-38 ; satisfied with the King's assurance, 338-39 ; and Fox pleased with each other, 343 ; wanting in spirit, 345 ; favours Dupplin for Legge's place, 346 ; distrustful of Fox's circular, 349 ; on management of the Commons, 349 n 147 ; political campaigning, 352-61 ; Bedford bitter against, 355-56 ; sends discretionary powers to Hartington, 357-58 ; complete victory for, in Commons, 369-70 ; gratification, 376 ; absolutism of, 380 ; relations with Fox, 385-86 ; member of appointment committee, 386 ; responsible for diplomatic revolution, 391 ; terror of, at French activity, 402-4 ; suspense of, 405 ; fears of, 409-10 ; forced to ask for Hanoverians, 410 ; virtually dictator, 412 ; parleys with the Dutch, 413 ; to Devonshire on Byng's expedition, 419 ; distressed by attacks, 424-5 ; blind confidence of, 426 ; blames Fox and Byng, 431 ; opposes Fox's Gibraltar-Minorca scheme, 434-35 ; on Treaty of Versailles, 435 ; dreams of coalition against France, 436 ; Fox to Devonshire on, ii. 5-6 ; ingratititude toward Fox, 6 ; and Hardwicke determine to discredit Fox, 6-7 ; distracted at Murray's demands, 8-9 ; fears coalition of Fox and Pitt, 9 ; fears and excuses of, 10 ; on question of diverting popular resentment from himself, 10-11 ; fosters suspicion of Fox, 12-14, 19, 25, 33 ; on the Prince of Wales and Bute matter, 18-19 ; in political difficulty, 20-22 ; out-generalled by Fox, 25-26 ; Chester-

field to, on Fox's difficult task, 27 ; caricatured and refused aid, 29 ; distress of, over Pitt, 30 ; interview and quarrel with Fox, 30 ; to Barrington on offering Seals to Pitt, 31, 364 ; flouts Fox, 32-33 ; distracted at Fox's statement of grievances, 34-35 ; receives Fox's ultimatum, 35 ; offers his place to Granville, 36 ; warns Lady Yarmouth, 37 ; excuses and protestations of, 37-38 ; conference of, with the King, 40-41 ; sends Chancellor to confer with Pitt, 43, 365 ; reign of, over if Pitt refuses, 45 ; meditates offering Fox the Pay Office, 47 ; Pitt would not serve with, 48, 365-66 ; lament of, 48 ; desperate efforts to keep his place, 48-49 ; resigns, 50, 93, 366, 371 ; incapacity and weakness of, 50-51 ; influence of, sways the Crown, 53 ; merciless toward Byng, 66 ; exonerated in Minorca inquiry, 70 ; kept informed, 82-83 ; regret of, that he 'could not rechoose Mr. Pitt', 93 ; Fox warns Devonshire against, 94 ; on Pitt's alliance with the Tories, 104 ; fears loss of his majority, 104-5 ; anxieties and suspicions of, aggravated by *The Test*, 109 ; on Pitt's impudence to King, 111 ; will not make alliance with Fox, 114 ; desirous of return, is offered his own terms by the King, 114-15 ; distracted and hesitating, 116 ; taunted by Granville, 116 n 151 ; to have first place in new ministry, 117 ; governed by Hardwicke, 118 ; deterred by disfavour of the Closet, 123 ; may join Opposition, 124 ; tries in vain to form an administration with Pitt, 124-26 ; hesitating between Fox and Pitt, 127 ; fears Fox as Paymaster, 128-29 ; refuses to surrender Exchequer to Grenville, 129 ; himself proposes a list to the King, 129-30 ; list of, lacks support in the Commons, 130 ; has the King's permission to treat, 133 ; frustrated by the King, 134 ; works to defeat Fox's ministry-making, 134-38 ; disaster to, averted by Fox, 146 ; returns to Treasury, 149 ; helps Fox to re-election, 155-56 ; abused by Halifax, 162 ; offended at Holderness, 164 n 41 ; relations

of, with Pitt, 167; rumour of reconciliation with Fox, 168; Pitt's refusal to act without, 166, 169; offers to resign, 180-81; lament of, at treatment on remaining, 181; not to superintend the new election, 183; to Hardwicke on a Tory Parliament, 190; quarrels with Bute, 191; recommends Bute for Secretary of State, 194; on the fisheries question, 204 n 144; become a cipher in the Cabinet, 222; counsels desertion of Frederick, 228; favours continuing Prussian subsidy, 229; annoyances crowded upon, 230; insubordination towards, compels resignation, 231; coolness of King toward, 231; refuses a pension, 231; wounded at way resignation is received, 232; offers submission through Mansfield, 237-38; cold relations of, with Mansfield, 238; Fox warns Bute against, 250, 258; approached by Halifax and Lyttelton, without avail, 258; takes removal of Devonshire as affront to the party, 262; plots an opposition, 262-63; abandons the idea, 265; on defection of his dependants, 267; deeply humiliated, 274-75; stripped of his lieutenancies, 275-76; grief and indignation of, 276-77.

Nivernais, Louis Jules Barbon Mancini-Mazarini, Duc de, i. 390.

North Briton, The, 298.

Nugent, Robert Nugent, 1st Earl, a second-rate man, i. 87; unearths bill for naturalization of foreign Protestants, 104; opposes Clandestine Marriage Bill, 127, 130; a speaker of ability, 359-60.

Okehampton, Borough of, ii. 94.

Onslow, Arthur, Speaker of the House, opposes the Regency Bill, i. 110; opposes the Clandestine Marriage Bill, 127; on Sheriff-depute Bill, 239; Fox asked to win over, 240; on Pitt's speeches, 398-99; attitude toward Pitt's breach of privilege, ii. 61; retires from Speakership, 219.

Opposition, Leaders of the, i. 19; effort of the, to reduce the army, 39-40; charges corruption in Parliament, 41-42; resolution of,

against subsidies, 123; paralysed since Prince's death, 175; in George III's first Cabinet, 209, 225. Orford, Earl of, *see* Walpole, Sir Robert.

Oswald, James, an efficient speaker, i. 359, 382; refuses to aid Newcastle, ii. 29; refuses place, 136; Halifax gets a place for, 162 n 34; opposes Newcastle, 230.

Paris, Treaty of, signed, ii. 282. *See also* Preliminaries.

Parliament, Meeting of, i. 208; prorogued, 253, 431; military measures discussed in, 397; opened, ii. 54. *See also* Commons. Paymaster, *see* Pitt, William; Fox, Henry.

Peace, *see* Preliminaries.

Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, i. 70, 78. Pelham, Henry, accepts Pay Office, i. 19; First Lord of the Treasury, 21; corruptionist, 23; character of, 23-26; hesitates to employ Pitt, 45; perplexed over Fox's marriage, 48; begins to form his Administration, 50; First Minister in everything, 51; attitude of, with Grenville in Mathews-Lestock case, 56; favours the regiment idea, 61; treated with disdain by the King, 62; fails to get Pitt nominated Secretary-at-War, 62-63; resigns, 64; returns to Ministry, 65; disheartened at the war expense, 69; chagrined at brother's tyranny, 70; differences of, with Newcastle, acute, 71, 89, 96; favours Fox for the Seals, 76; aims to lull discontent, 89; welcomed at Windsor Lodge, 89; opposes Newcastle's foreign policies, 93-94; seeks reconciliation with Newcastle, 96; conduct of, in Murray case, 100-1; in Anstruther-Erskine case, 102; defeated on bill for naturalization of foreign Protestants, 104-5; makes provision for the young Prince of Wales, 108; eulogizes Cumberland in opening regency debate in Commons, 109; on the Regency Bill, 111-12; to Lady Yarmouth against Bedford, 117-18; gives way to Newcastle, 118; advocates measure for reduction in the number of seamen, 123 n 67; opposed to Newcastle's

foreign subsidies, 124; suspicious of Fox, 124; defends Clandestine Marriage Bill, 129; rebukes Fox, 130; dubbed by Fox, 'the well-beloved Brutus', 131; on the Fox-Hardwicke quarrel, 137; death of, 143-44; a past-master of compromise, 143; memory of, defended by Fox, 373-74; friendship for Fox, ii. 307.

Pelham Administration, Condition of parties during, i. 10; resigned by agreement, 64; returned through mediation of Winnington, 65; takes no interest in America, 70; incapacity in foreign affairs, 258. *See also Ministry (Pelham).*

Pelham-Holles, Thomas, *see Newcastle.*

Pitt, William, in the Opposition, and hated by the King, 19; paying court to Lady Hamilton, 35; demagogism of, on army reduction, 39-40; resents losing cornetcy, 40; calls Fox the Administration's ablest defender, 42; philippic of, against the Carteret Administration, 43; as a debater, 45; dropped by his confederates, 45; among the 'Boy Patriots', 45 n 39; nothing found for, by the Pelhams, 51; offends the King, 45 n 40, 51 n 50; defends the regiments, 60; the King refuses to appoint Pitt as Secretary-at-War, 63; appointed Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, 66; defence of corruption by, 66; advocates pension for Duke of Cumberland, 67; promoted to Pay Office, 68; favours Fox for the Seals, 75, 81; silent regarding peace, 78; supporter of the Administration, 80; elected for Seaford, 80-81; fondness for notoriety, 81; as an orator, 83; seeks Newcastle's favour, 95; attacks one of Pelham's measures in Parliament, 95; on revision of a sentence by court martial, 97; in Trentham election case, 100; vehemence of, in Anstruther-Erskine case, 103-4; Fox's remark about, 105 n 33; has deserted the Prince of Wales, 106; insults Cumberland, 112; and followers plan an opposition, 142-43; candidate for Pelham's place, 145-46; the King opposed to, 148-49;

admits Fox's qualifications, 150; advice of, to his party, 150 n 121; on Fox, 151 n 121; no promotion for, 167; letters of lamentation to Newcastle, 169-72; on Robinson, 170 n 39; to Hardwicke, 172; returned for Aldborough, 176; on the management of Parliament, 178; on his political life, 178 n 67; drawn to Cumberland, 192; secures pension for invalid soldiers, 192-93; on affairs in America, 197; alliance with Fox, 204-5; rebuff to Newcastle, 204 n 133; attitude of, interpreted by Legge, 207; with the Cumberlands in election cases, 209; resentment of, at Lyttelton, 209; attacks Newcastle, 211; on Robinson in Fane case, 211-12; lashes Murray, 212; liable to dismissal, 214-15; to be let alone, 214 n 161; advises Fox on the wording of his demands, 221; in danger of dismissal, and dangerous to the Administration if dismissed, 227-28; resents preference shown to Fox, 286; makes overture to Newcastle through H. Walpole, 287-88; to Fox on the result, 289; turns to Leicester House, 289; picks a quarrel with Fox, 290-92; jealous of Fox, 290 n 167, 292; in collusion with Leicester House, 297-99; making overtures to Newcastle, 298-99; conference of Yorke with, 301-2; will accept no favour from Newcastle, 302; introduces Legge to the Princess, 304-5; interview of, with Hardwicke, 307-9; open rupture of, with Cumberland Party, 312; unfathomable ambition of, 313; preparations of, for opposition, 316; mentions subsidies to Bedford, 318 n 72; likely to attack the subsidies, 322; interview with Newcastle, 328-31; meets Newcastle twice again, 332; ultimatum of, 332-33; King uses scurrilous terms about, 347; great speech of, with rivers simile, 368; comment of to Fox, 370; dismissed from office, 371; on reduction of seamen, 373-74; tries to justify himself, 374; political lying of, 376; on prizes for sailors, 377-78; on increase of the army, 378-79; mortified ambition of, 379; re-

plies to Campbell on the Treaties, 387; condemns dismissal of Henry Erskine, 400; lashes Ministry for neglect of Minorca, 411; on Fox's position, 411; on Anson and Newcastle, 424; or Bute indispensable to the Administration, ii. 20; name of, proposed by Fox for the Seals, 21; chance for, coming, 29; King objects to, 40; declares to Hardwicke he will not assist Newcastle, 45, 48, 365–66; unsuccessful interview with Lady Yarmouth, 45–48; terms of, rejected by the King, 47; names further conditions, 48; King criticizes 'royal speech' prepared by, 54; supports King's request for money for Hanover, 55; speeches of, on behalf of Byng, 58; effort of, in the Closet, 59–60; reply to Fox, 61; appeal for Byng, 62; comodious gout of, 68, 69; loses great opportunity in Minorca inquiry, 70; Newcastle's overtures to, 73; King sends Fox to, 75–76, 366; refuses to co-operate with Fox, 76–77; acts in concert with Leicester House, 78, 366; the King sends Devonshire to, 79, 366; anxious for office, 80; refuses to serve with Fox, 80, 91, 366; 'arrogant dictator,' 81; new demands from, 84, 366–67; for Secretary of State in Granville's plan, 85; Devonshire presents revised plan to, 90–91; accepts the arrangements, 92; demands Fox's borough for Charles Townshend, 99; wins post of Surveyor of Works for brother, 100; forms an alliance with the Tories, 102–3; on *The Test*, 103; praises the Tories, 104; threatens to resign if thanks clause is included in Address, 106; Granville on madness of, 111; situation of, 111–13; takes up Fox's Gibraltar scheme, 112 n 137; King determined to get rid of, 114–15, 117; sends message to Newcastle by Sackville, 118–19; dismissed, 121; needs Newcastle's *clientèle* in Commons, 125; threat to Newcastle, 125; determines to confer Exchequer on Grenville, 126, 129; fears Fox, 129; barren interview of, with Newcastle, 129; excluded from Newcastle list, 129;

yields on Exchequer, 133; in Walpole's plan, 138; Ministry of, with Newcastle formed, 144; end of rivalry with Fox, 146; opportunity of, 147; political merits of, compared with Fox's, 148; and Newcastle, 149; ministerial organizer of victory, 150; cause of popularity of, 150–51; a world statesman, 151; estimate of conduct and career of, 151–53; defends Cumberland, 160; efforts of Bute against, 162; war measures of, costly, 164–65; unsatisfactory interview with Bute, 166; threatens to resign, 167; relations with Mansfield, 167; needs Bute's support, 168; quarrels with Bute, 169; supported in Parliament, 169–70; will not consider peace, 173–75; altercation with Newcastle, 174–75; to Knyphausen, 175; '*fanfaronde*' of, 175 n 67; objects to King's speech, 182; said to desire a Tory Parliament, 190; wants close union with Newcastle, 192; charges the Treasury with the extravagance of the war, 192; begs Newcastle to procure him an honourable retreat, 192–93; declares independence of Bute, 194; declaration of, to Bute, 197; opposition of, to peace, 198; to the *époques*, 198; carries the refusal in Cabinet, 199 n 135; sends expedition against Belle Isle, 199–200; charge of inhumanity against, 200; inflexible in peace negotiations, 201; on the fishery question, 201; reply to proposal for armistice, 201 n 141; Bute's attitude toward, 202; policy with Choiseul and Spain, 203–4; Cabinet opposes policy of, 205–6; Cabinet distrustful of, 206 n 147; 'insolence' of, 206; wants war declared against Spain, 207; resigns, 207; awarded a pension, and peerage for wife, 207; courts public opinion, 207–8; Barré's attack on, 219–21; Selwyn's speech against, 220; Fox against, 220–21; contemplates desertion of Frederick, 224; remarks of, on the Prussian situation, 233; refers to rumour of Fox's succeeding Newcastle, 234; on the Duke of Cumberland's fitness for affairs, 243; willing to return to power

- with Newcastle, 263; without support, 264; absent opening day, 270; speaks for exclusion of French from fisheries, 271; refuses to consider joining with Newcastle, 275, 282; Fox asks aid of, for earldom, 328 n 65.
- Pitt-Leicester-House coalition, against Newcastle's scheme, ii. 133.
- Pittites, The, plan an opposition, i. 142; alienation of, desired, 168; scrimmaging for seats, 176; alliance of, with the Cumberlands, 193; pledged to oppose Cumberland, 297; threatening attitude of, ii. 94; overture from, 125. *See* 'Cobham Cubs' and 'Cousinhood'.
- Politics, A black system of, 12; importance of, in eighteenth century, 20, 23; a new force in, ii. 182.
- Ponsonby, John, Speaker of Irish Commons, i. 138; unreconcilable with the Primate, 314; Kildare would not give up, 315.
- Port Mahon, Attack on, urged, i. 403; to be made, 408; weakness of, 413; siege of, 414; fall of, 430. *See also* Minorca.
- Porteous, Captain John, Fox on case of, in the House, i. 38-39; remembered against Fox, 147.
- Portsmouth, Duchess of, Fox's intimacy with, i. 32, 47.
- Potter, Thomas, a disreputable Pittite, i. 142, 176; speaks against France, 208; coaxes Bedford to condemn the Subsidies, 354-55; on Fox's thirst for power and money, 381 n 30; on the Russian Treaty, 386-87; assurances to Pitt, ii. 80; made Joint Paymaster, 92.
- Poulett, John Poulett, 2nd Earl, i. 251-3.
- Pratt, Sir Charles, made Attorney-General, ii. 144.
- Preliminaries of the Peace of Paris, Question of the disposition of, 264-65; in Parliament, 270-73; terms of, 273-74.
- Prince of Wales, *see* Frederick Lewis.
- Prince of Wales, *see* George (afterwards George III).
- Princess, The, *see* Augusta, Princess (wife of Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales).
- Princesse Gouvernante of Holland, Mary, i. 248; ii. 15.
- Protestants, Foreign, Disabilities of, i. 16; Bill for naturalization of, favoured by Pelham, thrown out, 104-5.
- Prussia, secures Silesia, i. 244; obstacle to alliance with, 246-47; Maria Theresa suspicious of, 249; Pitt maintains firm alliance with, ii. 151; Bute's condition for renewing subsidy to, 225; makes treaty of alliance with Russia, 227; subsidy to, withheld, 233. *See also* Frederick.
- Public Advertiser*, Letter in the, on a coalition of Fox and Pitt, ii. 22-23.
- Pulteney, William, a leader of the Opposition, i. 19; made Earl of Bath, 19; Carteret's attempt to set up, a failure, 21; and Granville attempt to form a new administration, 63; takes the Treasury, 64; tribute of, to Fox, 82; instigates reform in the marriage law, 126.
- Regency Bill, passed in Upper House, i. 109; bitter struggle on, in Commons, 110-13; passed, 114; hastens crisis between Bedford and Pelham, 116; of Grenville Ministry, ii. 296 n 15.
- Regiments, Case of the peers', i. 59-61, 66.
- Richmond, Charles, 3rd Duke of, Fox marries eldest daughter of, i. 47; anger of, 47-48; reconciled, 49; death of, 116 n 53.
- Richmond, Charles, 4th Duke of, under Fox's tutelage, i. 117; in Fox's circle, 140; strange conduct of, toward Bute, ii. 186-87; accepts Bedchamber, 186; resigns, 187.
- Rigby, Richard, a common friend of Fox and Bedford, i. 116; sarcastic over Bedford's successor, 119; of the Cumberland Party, 140; hopes Legge will bring his opposition into the Commons, 318; promises to vote for Treaties, 359; given seat in Board of Trade, 384; comment of, on Fox's resignation, ii. 38; dinner with Fox, 80; rumour of opposition from, 96; expects to be Bedford's secretary, 118; fee system of, opposed by Irish Primate, 172-73; fails to become Cofferer, 226; Fox seeks a place for, 235, 237; cruel conduct of, to Fox, 289-90, 307.

Robinson, Sir Thomas, appointed Secretary of State, i. 166; Pitt on, 170 n 39; praised by the King, 182; averse to managing the House, 186; place of, in Newcastle's projected 'system', 191; warns Newcastle of Fox's action, 200; lashed by Pitt and Fox in elections debate, 211-13; negotiations of, with Mirepoix, 262-66; reassures Mirepoix, 270; on Boscowen's *coup*, 278; on Hawke's instructions, 283; elevation of, to House of Lords proposed by Granville, 324; displaced by Fox, returns to the Bedchamber, 340; a cipher in office, 364; the King enjoys company of, ii. 12 n 18; Pitt's demand of peerage and the Seals for, 84; accepts Seals in new Ministry, 120; declines even under King's order to accept, 124; for Seals in Newcastle's scheme, 129.

Rochford, William Henry Zulestein, 4th Earl of, preferred by King for Groom of the Stole, i. 232; a dependent of Fox, 237.

Rockingham, Marquis, offers place in Prince's Bedchamber, ii. 32; will resign and join opposition, 138; removed from lieutenancy, 276, 380.

Reuillé (Comte de Jeuy), Antoine Louis, Negotiations referred to, i. 262; irresolute, 265; proposes to impugn England before every Court in Europe, 284 n 156; offer of, to Fox regarding peace, refused, 396-97.

Russia, Exorbitant demands of, for convention with Newcastle, i. 248; treaty with, far from assured, 296; concluded, 315; subsidy paid to, 316; treaty with defended by Hartington, 343; debate on treaty with, 386-88; vote for treaty with, 388; kept ignorant of Convention of Westminster till treaty was ratified, 437; joins the opposite system with Sweden against Prussia, 437.

Rutland, John Manners, 3rd Duke of, seeks the Privy Seal, i. 168; Lord Steward, 231; to resign and enter opposition, ii. 138, 141; question of admission of, to *Cenciabulum*, 260 n 133.

Ryder, Sir Dudley, Attorney-General, Fox's 'learned Casca', i. 131;

made Chief Justice, 167; wants borough of Tiverton for son, 326; asked by Newcastle to relinquish project, 327; death of, ii. 8.

Sackville, George Sackville-Germain, Viscount, with his father (Duke of Dorset) in Ireland, i. 138; non-committal, 354; moves address asking for Hanoverians, 411; feels aid could have been sent Minorca sooner, ii. 28; refuses aid to Newcastle, 29; gives up Fox for Leicester House, 55; for the Seals in new Ministry, 117, 118; bears message to Newcastle from Pitt, 118; refused to be tempted, 120; for Secretary-at-War in Walpole's scheme, 138; attachment of, to Leicester House prevents concurrence, 139; welcomed at George III's Court, 182.

St. Lucia, ii. 273.

St. Petersburg, convention of, signed, i. 315; Frederick II seeks a copy of, 389.

Sandwich, John Montagu, 4th Earl of, on Admiralty Board, i. 50; candidate for Secretary of State, 74; active member of peace commission, 78; close friend of Cumberland and Bedford, 87-88; Newcastle's breach with, 90-91; dispute of, with Halifax, 106; gives support to Regency Bill, 109; fears dismissal, 115; dismissed, 118; of the Cumberland Party, 140; gets two dependants elected, 176; Fox for, in election disputes, 208; petition lodged against successful candidates of, 240; triumph of, in Committee, 241; defeated on final vote, 241; arouses the war-spirit, 267 n 101; out of active politics, 318-19; made Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, 383-84; offered the Admiralty, 236-37; Cumberland disapproves acceptance by, 236-37; receives Spanish embassy, 263, 268.

Sandys, Samuel Sandys, 1st Baron, i. 383.

Sardinia, Amicable relations with, i. 391-92; hopes of Sardinia joining England, 437.

Saxe, Maurice, Maréchal de, Army of, advancing, i. 71; willing for peace, 77.

- Saxony, Treaty with, arranged by Williams, i. 94, 248; Fox supports treaty with, against Bedford, 123; a buffer state for Hanover, 254; Frederick II invades, 438.
- Schweidnitz, ii. 225, 234.
- Scotland, the Young Pretender lands in, i. 58; French to invade, 402; Hessians for service in, 404.
- Scots, The, hate Fox, i. 147, 152.
- Seaford, Borough of, i. 80.
- Secretary-at-War, *see* Fox, Henry.
- Selwyn, George, jeers at Pitt, ii. 220; on ministers, 306 n 37; friendship with Fox, 308.
- Septennial Act, i. 84.
- Seven Years' War, begin by Frederick II, i. 438; brought to a close, ii. 282.
- Shelburne, Earl of, *see* Lansdowne, William Petty, 1st Marquis of (Lord Fitzmaurice).
- Shirley, General William, Braddock's successor, dreams of conquering Canada, i. 393-94; letters to Mirepoix intercepted, 394; recalled, 394-95; letters regarding a colonial union, ii. 341.
- Silesia, Maria Theresa's aim to recover, i. 242, 244-45.
- Smith, Admiral, head of Byng court-martial, ii. 56.
- Spain, Dangerous ascendancy of, i. 13; war with, 19; neutrality of, secured through Wall, 392; friendship of, assured, 406; mediation of, fails, 407-8; friendship of England of value to, 438; demands from, ii. 174; feeling for a chance to come into the war, 200; a willing ally of France, 203; war with, breaks out, 208; humbled, 208; war with, a burden, 224; Newcastle on, 229-30.
- Spendthrift, The*, wrongly attributed to Fox (Lord Holland), ii. 309.
- Stade, Convention of, ii. 158-59.
- Stone, Andrew, Newcastle's secretary, i. 71; charged with drinking health of the Pretender, 125, 380; loses influence in Leicester House, 305; to ask Princess to help Newcastle secure Pitt, 306; intimate with Fox, 333; to entrap Fox, 336; assists in canvassing, 361; to Newcastle, on Fox's difficulties, ii. 20; questions Fox, 21; thinks Newcastle, should resign, 22; treated coldly at Leicester House, 49; suggests resignation to Newcastle, 49-50; of Newcastle's advisory cabinet, 116; no longer a supporter of Newcastle, 267.
- Stone, George, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of Ireland, i. 138; Hartington asks for removal of, from Board of Regency, 314-15; removed, 315; efforts of, against Rigby, ii. 172; tries to get a new Irish Parliament, 184-85; Fox favours dropping, from Regents, 185.
- Subsidies, Policy of, i. 52; Newcastle's plan for foreign, 93-94; the Opposition against, 123; extravagance of, 255; Newcastle alarmed for, 256; and recruiting, 295-363; domestic opposition to, 300, 303; Cumberland regards, as a mistake, 320; Fox on, 320-21; hostility to, increased, 341; Lyttelton defends the, 371-72; saved by Fox, 389. *See also* Treaties.
- Subsidy planned for Saxony, i. 52 n 54.
- Subsidy to Prussia used for new conquests, ii. 227; discussed in Cabinet, 229; Bute intends not to renew the, 230.
- Sundon, Mrs. Charlotte Ayres Clayton, afterward Viscountess, i. 38 n 26.
- Sweden in the alliance against Prussia, i. 437; expected to make peace, ii. 227.
- Swiss battalions for America, Question of accepting, i. 399.
- Temple, Lord, *see* Grenville, Richard (2nd Earl Temple).
- Test, The*, a violent paper against Pitt and Newcastle, ii. 101-2; Hardwicke on, 103; King ready to believe *Test* Fox's work, 114.
- Tories, The power of, broken, i. 14; attitude of, on the regiment question, i. 60; powerless and unfeared, 85-86; link their fate with Leicester House, 86; offer Newcastle their votes, 240; vote to defeat Fox, 241; conservative, watching the fight, 377; Pitt's alliance with, 102-5; reject Pitt's overture, 263; congregate at the Cockpit, 182-83.
- Tory Parliament, A, desired by Bute and Pitt, ii. 190.
- Toryism, as Jacobitism, i. 34;

principles of the new, ii. 178-79; a new phase of, 319-20; Fox believes, inevitable, 323.

Toulon, Naval battle off, i. 53.

Townshend, Charles, 3rd Viscount, Foreign policy of, i. 22.

Townshend, Charles, opposes Clandestine Marriage Bill, i. 127-28; proposes a registry of marriages, 130; Hillsborough on musical voice of, 131; Hardwicke's indignation at, 135-36; a Pittite, 142; made a Lord of the Admiralty, 167; philippic of, against Egmont, 238; dismissed, 380-81; asks for inquiry into American affairs, 399-400; organizing an opposition, ii. 29; infuriates Pitt by praising Fox, 63; in the Minorca investigation, 67-68; Pitt demands a borough of Fox's for, 99; on Fox's list for new Ministry, 118; hesitates to accept, 120; offended at receiving no promotion, 161; made Secretary-at-War, 196; resigns, 266.

Townshend, George Townshend, 1st Marquis of, on punishment of non-commissioned officers, i. 98; action of, in Anstruther-Erskine case, 102-3; a Pittite, 142; attacks Fox's letter, 372-73; on investigation of the Minorca question, ii. 67-68; moves for papers, 68; dislikes the amnesty to Fox, 161.

Treaties, The continental, Pitt opposed to, i. 308, 310; Lee out against, 311; first debate on, 367-70; Fox canvassing for, 380; second debate on, 386-88; passed by Parliament, 388-89. *See also Subsidies, Hesse, and Russia.*

Trentham, Lord, *see Gower, Granville Leveson-Gower, 2nd Earl.*

Tweeddale, John Hay, 4th Marquis of, Secretary of State for Scotland, despises efforts of Young Pretender, i. 62.

Twelfth Article of War, ii. 57; Pitt on the, 65.

Tyrawly, James O'Hara, 2nd Baron of, Governor of Minorca, i. 413; absent from post, 414; defended by Fox, ii. 170-71.

Utrecht settlement of 1713, i. 243; vagueness of, 257.

Vandeput, Sir George, i. 98-101.

Versailles, Treaty of, concluded, i. 409; text of, received, 435.

Viri (Viry), Comte de, ambassador for Sardinia, i. 391-92; consulted by Fox, 434; hopes of, 437; reports interview with Bute to Newcastle, ii. 166; Newcastle's spy at Prince's court, 169 n 55; urges Bute to procure the Seals, 191; mediator between Bute and Choi-seul, 240.

Vyner, Robert, i. 56.

Wade, Field-Marshal George, on the advance of the Young Pretender, i. 59.

Waldegrave, James Waldegrave, 2nd Earl, on Fox, governor of Prince of Wales, 108, 156 n 137; mediator between Newcastle and Fox, 216-19; on the result, 222 n 180; at last meeting, 339; on Bute, ii. 17; asks permission to resign, 18; on the Prince of Wales matter in *Conciliabulum*, 19; resigns, 26; to the King on Newcastle's desire to return to office, 114; to offer Newcastle any terms, 115; offered Treasury by the King, 134, 137; on his project, 140; on George III, 176-77.

Wall, Lieutenant-General Richard, actual Prime Minister of Spain, i. 392; holds Spain friendly to England, 407; French intrigue to secure dismissal of, 419; sends demands on England to Abreu, ii. 174.

Walpole, Horace (4th Earl of Orford), treatment of Fox, i. 6; hatred of the Pelhams, 127; urges Fox to decline the Seals, 162; part of, in political negotiations with Bedford, 209; appeals to Fox for delay in the Byng case, ii. 59; declines to help Fox with Pitt, 73; exposes Fox's plot to Devonshire, 86; submits plan of administration to Fox, ii. 138; on the Peace vote, 272 n 174; 'accepts Fox's bribe,' 272 n 174; on 'Execution day', 277; on Rigby's treatment of Fox, 289-90; on Paymaster's means of wealth, 293; on Fox as an orator, 330 n 68; Memoirs of, as authority, i. 5-6.

Walpole, Robert (1st Earl of Orford), Policy of, i. 17-18; fall of, 18, 42; enemies of, 19; policy of,

reversed, 19; regarded peace as essential, 22; corruption's arch organizer, 23, 28; on Fox, 27; made Earl of Orford, 27 n 1; envies Fox's avidity as a reader, 32 n 11; Fox serving, 35; Hervey recommends Fox to, 37; enemies of, seek to reduce the army, 39–40; defended by Fox, 40, 41–42; influence of, with the Pelhams and the Prince, 45 n 39; Bedford's opposition to, 50; Chesterfield's opposition to, 51 n 50; peace and prosperity under, 84–85; assault on by selfish followers, 85; influence of, over George II, 338; Fox avenges, ii. 72; pacific administration of, 179; Fox's loyalty to, 308 n 40; greatest organizer of system of corruption, 316.

Walpole of Wolterton, Horatio Walpole, 1st Baron, interviews Newcastle on behalf of Pitt, i. 287–88, 307; repulsed, 289; opinion of Pitt, 299; promised a peerage, 360. War Party, The Ministry and the, i. 225–94; Cumberland, active leader of, 271; reckless obstinacy of, 272; thwarted by a trick, 279–80; victory for, 280; Pitt had supported germ of, 287; growing ascendancy of, 297; endorsed by Pitt, 308; dominance of, terminated, 342; Fox as a member of, ii. 331. *See also* Cumberland Party. Washington, Major George, surrenders to the French, i. 194.

Wesel, ii. 273.

West, James, Secretary to the Treasury, i. 197.

West, Vice-Admiral Temple, in Byng's expedition, i. 417; in Council at Minorca, 429; deprived of command and under arrest, 430; acquitted ii. 56.

Westminster, Convention of, i. 389–90, 409.

Whig families, Task of annihilating the, ii. 178.

Whig Party, *see* Whigs.

Whiggism, Plutocratic, i. 84; has a fatal foe in Newcastle, 85; not overlordship in Fox's belief, 213; the last struggle of, ii. 180.

Whigs, The, Commercialism of the, i. 14, 15, 16; fortified by a system of corruption, 15, 81; despotism of, 15–16; and the guardianship of Hanover, 21–22; supreme

since fall of Bolingbroke, 84; overbearing and over-confident, 84; forces of disintegration among, 85; faction in ranks of, 87; in the Murray controversy, 100; larger number of, in Parliament, 178; consternation of, over Pitt's alliance with the Tories, ii. 103; support Pitt–Newcastle Ministry, 170; a nearly solid phalanx, 173; near end of their power, 179; have no unity to resist new force, 180; power no longer centred in the, 182; disruption of, 238; overthrown, 278; Fox the champion of the downfall of, 332.

Wilkes, John, a Pittite, i. 142; petition of, against Deleval, 210; defended by Pitt, 211; an inveterate enemy of Fox, ii. 298–99.

Williams, Sir Charles Hanbury, Fox married at house of, i. 47; boon-companion of Fox and Winnington, 67; interests of, watched by Fox, 79; a profitable commission for, 80; envoy to Berlin, 80; purchases treaty with Saxony, 94; the King refuses to receive, 122; of the Cumberland Party, 140; urges Fox to decline the Seals, 162; sent to Russia with bribes, 296; concludes convention with Russia, 315; King furious at expenditures of, 316; keeps Russia ignorant of Convention of Westminster, 437; suicide of, ii. 161; one of Fox's intimates, 307.

Wilmington, Spencer Compton, 1st Earl of, i. 19.

Winchelsea and Nottingham, Daniel Finch, 2nd Earl of, accepts Admiralty, ii. 122; the King insists on, 127; at second meeting, 137; at third, and sanguine, 139; gives up the Admiralty, 144.

Windsor, Borough of, i. 37.

Winnington, Thomas, a friend of Fox, i. 34; made Paymaster-General, 46; agrees with Fox in Mathews-Lestock case, 56; opposed to the regiments, 60; resigns, 65; mediator with King for restoration of Pelham Ministry, 65; death of, 67; Walpole on the wit of, 67; one of Fox's intimates, ii. 307.

Woburn Abbey, country home of Duke of Bedford, i. 209.

Wolfe, Major-General James, ii. 150.

Yarmouth, Countess of, the King's mistress, i. 73; espouses the cause of Bedford, 92; Pelham's hint to, against Bedford, 117-18; showers favours on Fox, 182-83; wishes Fox to be a minister, 187, 188-89; suspected of intrigue, 236; to Hanover with King, 254; favours Newcastle's plans, 303; on Legge and Newcastle, 345; thinks Pitt should be secured, ii. 20; calls Fox a '*mauvais choix*', 20; tells Newcastle to 'do the best he can with Mr. Fox', 34; attempt of, to dissuade Fox, 39; for Fox, 41; Pitt's audience with, 45-47; announces Fox's resolution, 136.

Yonge, Sir William, Secretary-at-

War, appointed Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, i. 68; on the Regency Bill, 112-13; death of, 311.

Yorke, Charles, replies to Fox's attack on his father, i. 129; interview of, with Pitt, 301-2; gossip about, 381; saves his place, ii. 278.

Yorke, Sir Joseph, Ambassador to The Hague, Hardwicke solicits colonelcy for, i. 234; on the Barrier question, 249, instructions to, from *Conciliabulum*, ii. 14-15; peremptory message to Holland held back by, 15; warm dispute over, in Closet, 15-16.

Yorke, Philip, First Earl Hardwicke, *see* Hardwicke.

Young Pretender, The, *see* Charles Edward.

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